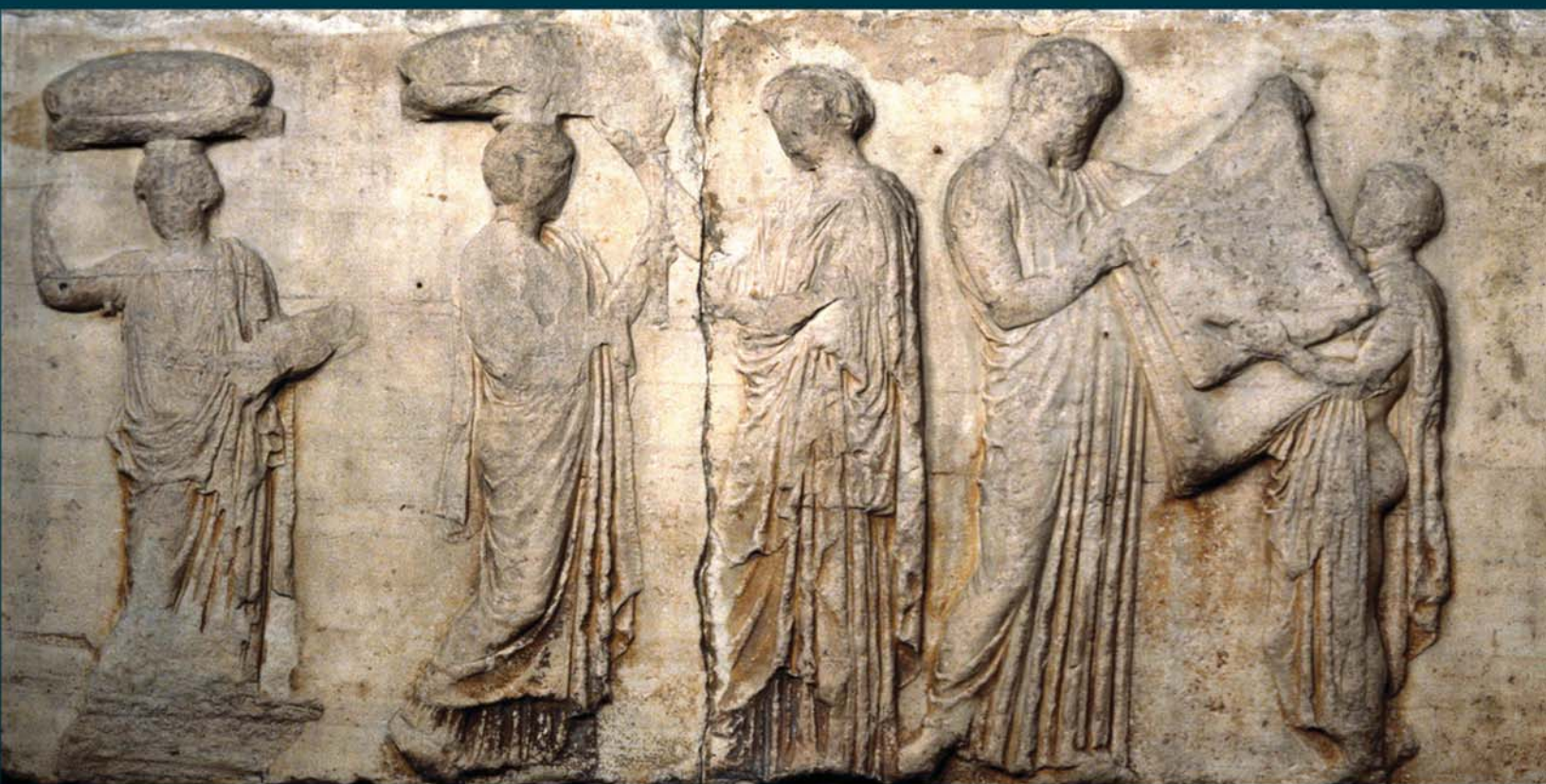


TEXTILES & CULT

IN THE ANCIENT MEDITERRANEAN



CECILIE BRØNS & MARIE-LOUISE NOSCH

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TEXTILES AND CULT IN THE ANCIENT MEDITERRANEAN

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TEXTILES AND CULT IN THE ANCIENT MEDITERRANEAN

Edited by

CECILIE BRØNS AND MARIE-LOUISE NOSCH

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Preface

The present volume is the result of the conference *Textiles and Cult in the Mediterranean Area in the 1st Millennium BC*, held in Copenhagen in November 2013 and hosted by the National Museum of Denmark and the Danish National Research Foundation's Centre for Textile Research, University of Copenhagen. Experts from the fields of Ancient History, Assyriology, Classical Archaeology, Semitic Philology, and Classical Philology came together to explore the role of textiles in ancient religion. They generously exchanged ideas, research results, and presented various views, theories, and methods. It was a specific aim to cross disciplinary boundaries, both between cultures and chronological phases, but also to keep the focus of textiles and garments as visual, tactile, and material items. While most of the articles in this volume originate as papers held at this conference, several contributions were added in order to broaden the scope of the topic. The present volume thus includes the Roman period and Late Antiquity and a larger geographical area including Palmyra.

The present volume addresses topics such as textile production in sanctuaries, the use of textiles as votives, and ritual dress from different perspectives: epigraphy, literary sources, iconography, and archaeological material. Obviously, such topics are challenging, since the textiles themselves usually have disappeared today due to the climatic and environmental conditions in the Mediterranean area.

The book is organised geographically: the first part is dedicated to Greece, the second to Italy, and the third to the Levant and the Near East. Furthermore, there is a final section on Late Antiquity. There are eight contributions dealing with Greek evidence, five with evidence from Italy, and seven with Near Eastern evidence, while one chapter on Late Antiquity ends the book. The chronological period covered in the articles generally spans from the beginning of the 1st millennium BCE to Late Antiquity. Each contribution is a separate chapter with footnotes and bibliography. While we have attempted consistency, each author's style is respected, *e.g.* choice of British or American English including punctuation.

A very large part of the articles deal with aspects of ritual dress. This can possibly be explained by the fact that there is an abundance of iconographical sources on this particular topic – from Greek vase painting to Roman sculptural arts. Furthermore, there is a wealth of written sources in Greek and Latin describing the dress of *e.g.* priests and priestesses. The second most common topic in this book is textile production in ritual contexts. The majority of articles focusing on this topic is based on the presence of textile tools recovered in ritual contexts, while some also include written sources. It seems that generally more scholarly attention is being paid to inconspicuous finds such as loom weights and spindle whorls in excavation reports etc., which provide essential knowledge of possible ritual production in sanctuaries. Only a minority of the articles deal specifically with the topic of textiles as votive offerings. This is not surprising, given the difficulty in identifying this custom since the textiles themselves have left no trail in the archaeological record and only few written sources attest to the custom. Yet the offering of textiles appears to have been an essential part of ancient ritual practice, which deserves much more scholarly attention. Although the present book includes 21 articles, there are still topics, which are not or only briefly touched upon, such as how textiles were specifically incorporated into the ritual practices. In this respect, especially their use to dress cult images deserves more attention.

It is our hope that this book will bring textiles to the attention of a wider range of scholars of the ancient Mediterranean world, in particular scholars specialising in ancient ritual and religion and that it will inspire to new international conferences and publications dealing with this until now neglected topic.

We would like to express our sincere gratitude to those individuals and institutions who have contributed to the success of the conference and to the editorial work for the publication. First and foremost for the generous financial support from our sponsors and hosts providing the institutional and financial framework for this conference: the Danish National Research Foundation's Centre for Textile Research (CTR), the National Museum of Denmark,

the Saxo Institute, University of Copenhagen, and the Ny Carlsberg Glyptotek. This publication benefitted from the editorial assistance and advice of our colleagues Peder Flemestad, Cherine Munkholt, Jonathan Wiener, and Neil Stanford. We also warmly thank Ana Cecilia Gonzales for photographing the Palmyra portraits in the Ny Carlsberg

Glyptotek for the articles in this volume. Finally, we warmly thank all participants for their insightful and stimulating papers, lively discussions, inspiring exchange of ideas, both during the conference and in continued exchanges after the conference.

Cecilie Brøns & Marie-Louise Nosch

Part I

Greece

Offering of cloth and/or clothing to the sanctuaries: A case of ritual continuity from the 2nd to the 1st millennium BCE in the Aegean?

Tina Boloti

The Minoan and the Mycenaean contribution to “that product of fusion which is the historical Greek religion”,¹ emphasised already in 1927 by Martin Nilsson, in the first edition of his reference work *The Minoan-Mycenaean Religion and its Survival in Greek religion*, still remains a crucial problem for scholars.

Ritual offering of cloth and/or clothing to the gods, encountered in many parts of the ancient Greek world should be included among the cults which “may have blended to a large extent” in the Aegean,² since it is attested as far back as the 2nd millennium BCE. Thanks to several representations focused on the “sacred dress” in various artistic media (seals, frescoes *etc.*), and despite their uneven, geographical and chronological distribution, this religious practice can be detected continuously from the late Middle until the end of the Late Bronze Age, with the earliest certain attestation coming from the Palace of Knossos. Following the Minoans, the Mycenaeans adopted, and in all probability adapted, the aforementioned ritual; Linear B tablets from Knossos and Pylos provide evidence of textile offerings to both male (*Enosidaon*, Poseidon) and female deities (*da-pu₂-ri-to-jo po-ti-ni-ja*, *po-ti-ni-ja*, *pe-re-*82*). After examining the iconographic and the written evidence from the 2nd millennium BCE I aim to discuss the crucial problem of ritual continuity or discontinuity in the 1st millennium BCE.

The iconographic evidence from the 2nd millennium BCE

The earliest evidence of clothing offerings to a divinity in the Aegean is provided,³ albeit implicitly, by the famous pair of MM III miniature faience robes from the Knossian palace (Fig. 1.1).⁴ Their votive character was considered indisputable due to their discovery in the so-called Temple Repositories.⁵ Notwithstanding that they are identical to customary female attire (tight bodice, long, bell-shaped skirt, girdle), they are clearly differentiated from it due to their elaborate decoration, the ornament consisting of a bunch of flowering crocuses within a wavy border. It seems far from coincidental that the crocus motif,⁶ identified as “a special

1 Nilsson 1950, 4.

2 Nilsson 1950, 4.

3 The lack of a widely-accepted terminology for Aegean prehistoric dress items is a perennial cause of complaint among researchers, see for example Crowley 2012 and Lillethun 2012.

4 Actually, as indicated in Panagiotaki 1999, 101, 103, fig. 27, pl. 16f, 17 three female robes were discovered, one of which was partially preserved, as well as three belts.

5 Evans 1921, 506, εικ. 364 a–d. Evans refers to them as “votive robes and girdles”, while in Nilsson 1950, 311 it is stressed that “They can only be explained as votive offerings to a goddess, her sacred wardrobe”.

6 Similarly decorated garments, worn by the “Saffron Gatherers” from the first floor and from the “adyton” on the ground floor of Xeste 3 simply emphasize their close relationship with *Potnia*. For crocus costumes in Aegean Bronze Age iconography see Rehak 2004 (with a catalogue of the available iconographic evidence).



Figure 1.1. Miniature faience robes from the Knossian palace. (After Evans 1921, 506, fig. 364 a–d).

attribute of the Great Minoan Goddess”,⁷ also decorates the tight bodice of *Potnia* from the first floor of *Xeste 3* at Akrotiri (Fig. 1.2). This woman, flanked by a griffin and a monkey, the latter offering her a posy of flowers from a smaller pannier full of saffron lying in front of her, is the only indisputable female divinity in Aegean iconography. She could have been the recipient of a similar dress – the crocus flowers offered to her could “be used to make dye, perhaps in some separate, but parallel cloth-making process, for which the sanctuary was responsible”.⁸ Evidently, the gathering and offering of crocuses was common ritual practice of the period,⁹ an obvious and symbolic *rite de passage* as demonstrated by the aforementioned LC IA wall paintings in *Xeste 3* and the analogous theme of the “Saffron Gatherer Monkey” at Knossos.¹⁰

Considering the offering as the core of the ritual and the evidence from the 2nd to the 1st millennium BCE, Peter Warren proposed a ritual sequence of four stages (namely

production, transportation, offering and adoration of the garment respectively) based mainly on a series of scenes on LM I seals or seal impressions.¹¹ Yet he was only able to recognise the last three stages in iconography, since evidence for the first stage, referring to the production of a garment, can only be detected archaeologically.¹² For this first stage Warren cited two storerooms of loom weights – the first in the Palace of Knossos and the second in a LM IB building excavated on the Knossos Stratigraphical Museum site,¹³ which “from their find contexts, have been used for weaving sacred robes, by *Minoan Arrephoroi*”.¹⁴ As far as the dyeing of robes is concerned, he suggested that saffron is a likely substance, judging by the stamens of crocuses offered to the aforementioned *Potnia* from Akrotiri.¹⁵

After its production, the garment would have been conveyed to the shrine. This second stage in the hypothetical ritual sequence seems to be represented on a steatite seal-

7 Evans 1921, 264–265.

8 Tzachili 2005, 115.

9 Tzachili 2005, 114 “The fourth, and last, crocus-gatherer, on the north wall, is emptying her basket before the central figure into the large swallow pannier into which all the saffron flowers are put, possibly to dry.” “This introduces differentiation: some saffron flowers are reserved for the goddess and others for humans – which is why they are carefully kept in separate baskets.”

10 This wall painting, initially restored by Émile Gilliéron père as a saffron-gatherer boy, was revised by Nicolaos Platon in Platon 1947, who restored it as a monkey.

11 For a brief overview of seals, either made of metal or of semi-precious stones, and their clay impressions (sealings) in the Aegean Bronze Age see Hood 1978, 209–232.

12 Warren 1988, 20.

13 As argued in Warren 1988, 20: “we may therefore relate to this stage two stores of loom weights, the collection of over four hundred found with shrine models and other ritual objects in the palace of Knossos and giving the name to the area, the “Loom weight Basements”, and second the group of over eighty found fallen with *rhytons* and other cult vessels in the LM IB building on the Knossos Stratigraphical Museum site.”

14 Warren 1988, 20.

15 Warren 1988, 20.



Figure 1.2. The Potnia from Xeste 3, Akrotiri (detail). (After Dumas 1992, 162, fig. 125).

stone from the Palace of Knossos¹⁶ and on four LM I clay sealings, from Akrotiri, Agia Triada and Zakros. The striding female figure on the Knossian seal-stone CMS II.3, no. 8, who supports a double axe on her left shoulder and carries a robe in her right hand (Fig. 1.3), was initially identified as the “Minoan goddess”. Nevertheless, she could equally be interpreted as a processional woman, a priestess in all probability, carrying symbolic ritual objects, since the scene finds its counterpart on the sealing CMS V, Suppl. 3, no. 394 (Fig. 1.4) from the complex Δ (room 18β) at Akrotiri. Although the combination of double axe and garment is repeated on the Theran sealing, the processional figure is male. The same could be argued in the case of the clay sealing CMS II.6, no. 11 from Hagia Triada where two figures, dressed in the characteristic “hide skirt”, are shown leaving a building (sanctuary? palace?) in procession (Fig. 1.5). Despite the objections expressed by other scholars,¹⁷ Pierre Demargne suggested that the second man carries the “sacred robe”.¹⁸ Double axe and “sacred robe” are also carried, respectively, by two processional male figures, clad in the ceremonial “hide skirts”,¹⁹ on the clay sealing CMS II.7, no. 7 from Zakros (Fig. 1.6). A slightly different depiction of the ritual carrying of a robe is provided by the scene on the sealing CMS II.6, no. 26 from Hagia Triada (Fig. 1.7). Here, the robe appears to be fastened to the end of a staff, which rests across the shoulder of a woman turning her head towards it.²⁰ Despite the apparent small size of the item – probably due to the limited surface of the seal – the bending of the staff gives the impression of considerable weight.²¹

The possible recipient of a robe offering is depicted on the seal-stone CMS VI, no. 283 from Chania (Fig. 1.8). The woman, identified by Evans as the Minoan goddess, sits on a low column and appears to be being assisted by two



Figure 1.3. The lentoid sealstone CMS II.3, no. 8 from Knossos.



Figure 1.4. The sealing CMS V, Suppl. 3, no. 394 from Akrotiri.

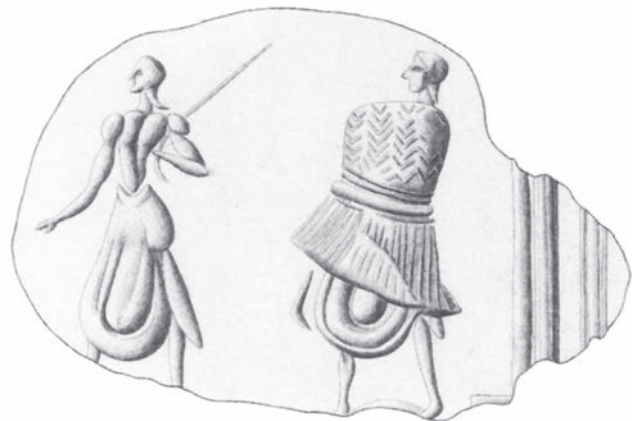


Figure 1.5. The sealing CMS II.6, no. 11 from Hagia Triada.

16 From the so-called “Court of the Stone Spout” see Evans 1921, 434, fig. 312a.

17 For different opinions, *e.g.* Doro Levi, who believes that it is a breastplate or Colette Verlinden, who argues for a mantle/cape, which should be seen as part of the military equipment of a senior officer, see Verlinden 1985, 136–140.

18 Demargne 1948, 284.

19 The ceremonial character of this peculiar type of skirt was already stressed in Paribeni 1908 and supported by many scholars afterwards, see Nilsson 1950, 155–156; Σαπουνά-Σακελλαράκη 1971; Marinatos 1993, 135–137; Boloti (in press, b).

20 For an interpretative approach of the turning of the head in the Aegean Bronze Age iconography, see Boulotis 2012.

21 An offertory scene has been suggested recently in Pini 2010 for an unusual LM I four-sided prism, once in a private collection in USA, now in the Arthur M. Sackler Museum at Harvard, which was unfortunately not included in the CMS XIII by Kenna and Thomas.

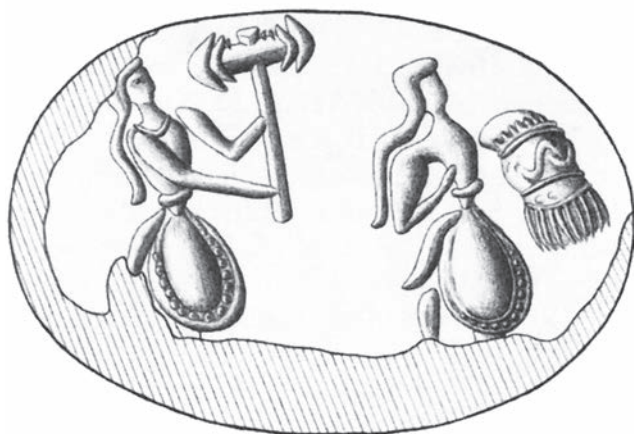


Figure 1.6. The sealing CMS II.7, no. 7 from Zakros.



Figure 1.7. The sealing CMS II.6, no. 26 from Hagia Triada.

female servants in getting dressed, probably in a brand-new garment. Warren, who adopted this interpretation, placed the Chaniotan seal-stone in the core of the ritual, namely the third stage of the sequence.²²

A similar scene has been suggested for the fresco from the so-called “Room of the Ladies” in the homonymous “House of the Ladies” at Akrotiri (Fig. 1.9).²³ A bare-breasted woman, probably at a stage of lactation judging by her red nipple, holds in her right hand an elaborately decorated



Figure 1.8. The lentoid sealstone CMS VI, no. 283 from Chania.

skirt²⁴ similar to her own. With her left hand, she leans on something, which is barely discernible at the edge of the preserved wall painting. According to Nanno Marinatos’ reconstruction,²⁵ this should be the forearm of the seated female figure on which can be detected the short sleeve of her bodice. Another adorant, dressed and bejewelled similarly to the bare-breasted woman also participates in the scene. She is shown striding eastwards, holding something in her hands, which has unfortunately been lost. According to Marinatos, the fresco can be described as a costuming scene in which women in festival attire bring clothes and ornaments to a seated woman. Although the latter has variously been interpreted as the lady of the house or a goddess,²⁶ Marinatos regards her as a priestess who is about to be dressed and ornamented for some ceremonial ritual.²⁷

A possible further stage in the ritual sequence, Warren’s fourth stage,²⁸ namely the “adoration of the robe” can be detected on the fragmentary sealing CMS II.6, no. 7 from Hagia Triada (Fig. 1.10) and, possibly, on the lentoid seal-stone CMS II.3, no. 145 from the House Δ at Malia (Fig. 1.11). On the sealing from Hagia Triada two attendants

24 In Marinatos 1984, 100–101 it is stressed “that what appears as a flounced skirt was actually a flounced kilt worn over the robe and tied with cords around the waist.”

25 Marinatos 1984, 97–102.

26 Actually a suggestion made by Sp. Marinatos as referred to in Marinatos 1984, 104.

27 Marinatos 1984, 102.

28 Warren 1988, 22.

22 Warren 1988, 20–22.

23 Dumas 1992, 33–35.



Figure 1.9. The fresco from the “Room of the Ladies” at Akrotiri. (After Doumas 1992, 38, fig. 7).

appear to be fastening a robe as a “trophy”, possibly after its conveyance to the sanctuary, while two others approach, as if they want to participate in the ritual act as well. Given the impression that it consists of two superimposed garments, the object seems to be of considerable weight. On the other hand, on the seal-stone from Mallia, a centrally-placed robe between two standing figures, a male and a female according to Demargne,²⁹ who hold out their arms towards and above it, could be understood “as a vehicle for possession by the divinity” “like the figure-of-eight shield elsewhere and the baetyl”.³⁰ Nevertheless, the outspread arms here are more

²⁹ Demargne 1948, 280–281.

³⁰ Warren 1988, 22.



Figure 1.10. The fragmentary sealing CMS II.6, no. 7 from Hagia Triada.



Figure 1.11. The lentoid sealstone CMS II.3, no. 145 from the House Δ at Mallia.

likely to indicate its transfer from one figure to the other rather than reverence for the “sacred robe”.

In the ritual context of clothing offerings we should also include offerings of cloth not yet used to make garments, although the latter did not have the strict “personal character” of the former, since, practically, they were addressed to the religious institutions rather than to the divinity itself.³¹

³¹ The economic role of the sanctuaries and the management of goods by the religious personnel has already been stressed on the basis of written sources as well as of archaeological evidence from the Aegean Late Bronze Age. Written evidence for textile workshops connected to sanctuaries has been discussed in Lupack 2008, 102–114, while archaeological evidence has been discussed *ibid.*, 131–161.

A cloth offering ritual is implied on an LC I fresco of a seated woman (goddess? priestess?) from Phylakopi.³² This partially-preserved female figure, dressed in a skirt richly decorated with a pair of swallows³³ holds in her left hand a long folded piece of blue cloth,³⁴ while reaching down for it with her right. This piece of cloth would probably have been presented to her earlier by a standing female figure from the same composition, bending forward with hands extended in a typical gesture of offering (Fig. 1.12).³⁵ The Phylakopi fresco, which seems to represent the final stage of the ritual, becomes more intelligible when set alongside another wall painting from the Knossian palace.

On the LM II wall painting from the Corridor of the Procession at Knossos, a long, fringed piece of cloth is offered to a standing female figure by a group of men, as restored by Christos Boulotis (Fig. 1.13).³⁶ Unlike Arthur Evans, who had initially suggested numerous ribbons hanging freely on either side of the woman's dress and a processional scene with two superimposed registers (Fig. 1.14),³⁷ Boulotis suggested a single register of figures in separate offering scenes. Although the prominent position of the woman is certain,³⁸ her identity remains ambiguous. Evans identified her as a "goddess" holding, quite hypothetically, a double-axe in each hand,³⁹ while Marc Cameron suggested the duality of "goddess" or "priestess",⁴⁰ judging by her equal size with the other processional figures and her standing position. Her mortal nature would also

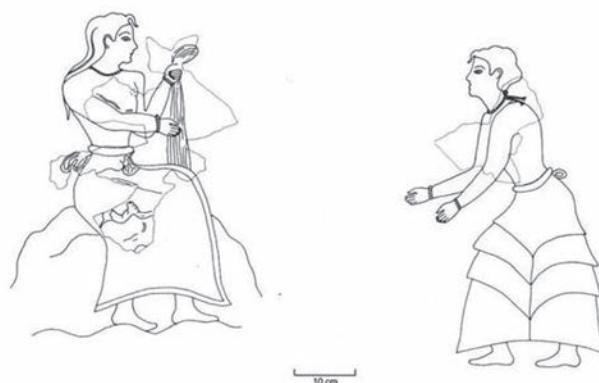


Figure 1.12. The LC I fresco of a seated woman (goddess? priestess?) from Phylakopi. (After Morgan 2005, 32, fig. 1.16).

be stressed by her dress, given the evident similarity of its lower border to that of a leading processional woman from the Pylian palace.⁴¹ Despite its restoration as a flounced skirt,⁴² I recently argued that it should rather be identified as a long robe with a vertical band, almost identical to the aforementioned Pylian dress, which was a typical type of garment of the Mycenaean female priesthood.⁴³

The ritual offering of cloth in mainland Greece is attested thanks to the fresco fragment 103 from the Palace of Tiryns (Fig. 1.15). The fragment, which belongs to the LH IIIB women's procession fresco, was restored after a thorough study by Boulotis as the hand of a processional woman, who carries a female figurine in conjunction with a long folded blue cloth wound round her thumb.⁴⁴ According to Boulotis, the ritual female processions, depicted in all the Mycenaean palatial centres (Mycenae, Tiryns, Pylos, Thebes)⁴⁵ indicate "the possibility of a significant inter-regional festival, probably in honour of a female divinity, as part of the Mycenaean religious calendar—a spring festival to judge by the offerings of lilies and wild roses in the processions at least at Thebes and Pylos".⁴⁶ The *te-o-po-ri-ja* term of the Linear B tablets, which has been persuasively argued by Hiller to mean the ceremonial carrying of a divine image, could actually be combined with the carrying of cloth for dedication or other cult use,⁴⁷ as indicated by the Tiryns procession fresco fragment 103.

32 The fragments of this wall painting were found in House G 3: 6 and 7 of the second city at Phylakopi, in the same room as the well-known frieze of flying fish. It should be noted that in Atkinson *et al.* 1904, 73–75 the seated figure was understood to be a male, despite the white skin colour, and its rich costume is thought to be a mark of royalty or other high status. Interpreted in this way, the standing figure seemed to have been a servant or subordinate. With regard to the interpretations of this particular scene, Bosanquet concludes that only a future discovery of a better-preserved depiction of the scene can provide answers to questions, which for now must remain open.

33 For costumes with elaborate decoration (floral, faunal or architectural) see Boloti (in press, a).

34 In Evans 1930, 40–42 it is described as a "fishing net".

35 Morgan 2005, 32, fig. 1.16 (forthcoming reconstruction of the figures from the Pillar Crypt by L. Morgan).

36 Boulotis 1987, 150, fig. 8. Iconographically, the manner in which the long cloth is held by the first processant strongly resembles the wall painting of the young boy from *Xeste 3* at Akrotiri *cf.* Doumas 1992, 149, fig. 113.

37 Evans 1928, 721–724, fig. 450 (Group B).

38 Cameron 1975, 139.

39 Evans 1928, 721–724, fig. 450 (Group B).

40 In Cameron 1975, 139 the fact has also been stressed that Evans' restoration with double axes in her hands is arbitrary.

41 Lang 1969, 85 (50Hnws/priestess' feet), a fresco fragment which dates from the LH IIIB period according to Lang 1969, 221.

42 Evans 1928, 729, fig. 456a, where this decorative detail is featured.

43 Boloti 2014, 247–254.

44 Boulotis 1979.

45 Immerwahr 1990, 114–121.

46 Boulotis 2000b, 1116.

47 For a recent appraisal of the term see Gulizio 2012.



Figure 1.13. Boulotis' restoration of the "goddess" from the "Procession fresco" receiving a piece of cloth. (After Boulotis 1987, 154, fig. 8).

A similar scene provides in all probability the roughly contemporary fragment 3 H 23 from the Pylian palace (Fig. 1.16),⁴⁸ where a seated woman holds a bundle of thin dark coloured straps in both her hands. Although these straps were initially interpreted as bunches of flowers,⁴⁹ it seems more plausible to regard them as pieces of folded cloth, judging by their similarities with the abovementioned pieces of cloth on the LC IA fresco from Phylakopi and the fragment from the Tiryns' procession fresco respectively.

The establishment of cloth and/or clothing offering rituals in mainland Greece is also implied by two unusual LH IIIB fragmentary frescoes, the first from the Pylian palace (40 H ne)⁵⁰ and the second from the West House at

Mycenae.⁵¹ While on the former a sacral knot or a flounced skirt is carried, in all probability by a Minoan Genius,⁵² on the latter a piece of cloth (sacral knot?) or a flounced skirt is offered by a wild goat to a seated figure (part of the white surface is discernible at the bottom right edge of the fresco),⁵³ despite the initial suggestion that it features

48 Lang 1969, 63–64 (3 H 23), pl. 2, 121, B.

49 Lang 1969, 63.

50 Although it was initially ascribed by Lang 1969, 79 to "a woman standing left", it was soon after attributed by Gill

1970 to a "Minoan Genius". Despite their disagreement, they argued unanimously that the figure carries a piece of cloth or clothing; both interpretations were adopted in Immerwahr 1990, 192 (My No 8), where it is referred to as "a sacral knot, or a flounced skirt".

51 For a colour photograph of the fresco see Tournavitu 2012, pl. CLXIXc.

52 Boloti 2016.

53 Boulotis 2013, 145.

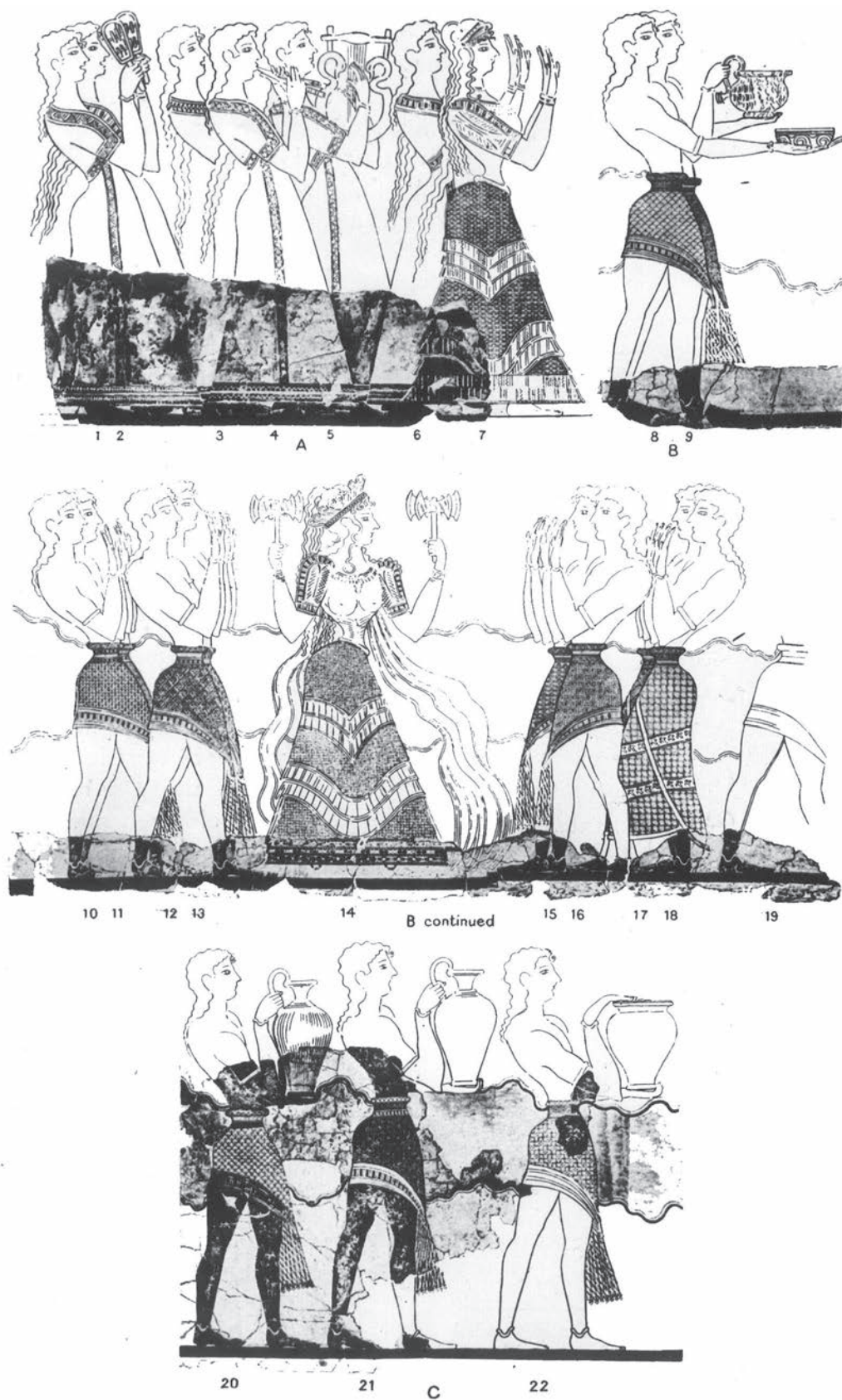


Figure 1.14. The LM II wall painting from the Corridor of the Procession, Knossos' palace. (After Evans 1928, 723, fig. 450).

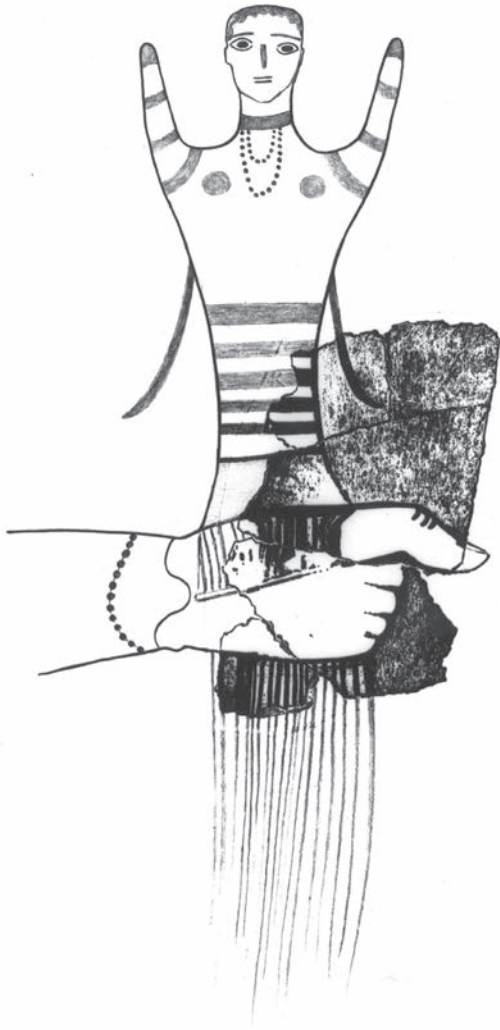


Figure 1.15. The fresco fragment 103 from the palace of Tiryns restored by Boulotis. (After Boulotis 1979, 65, fig. 1).

“an intimate relationship between a female figure and a heraldically disposed animal”.⁵⁴

The written evidence from the 2nd millennium BCE

The often-ambiguous iconographic evidence from the Aegean Late Bronze Age as cannot be fully appraised without taking into account the related written sources. Linear B tablets from the palatial archives of Knossos and Pylos undoubtedly testify to cloth offerings to both male and female divinities, which would have taken place either occasionally or regularly, according to an



Figure 1.16. The fresco fragment 3 H 23 from Pylos. (After Lang 1969, pl. 121).

established religious calendar.⁵⁵ “The fact that the palaces made these offerings indicates, on the one hand, the value that they attached to fulfilling their ritual obligations. But the offerings also entailed an economic investment on the part of the palace, and from the point of view of the religious sphere, these offerings constituted a source of support (although the significance of this support is open to question)”.⁵⁶ Two specific types of cloth were offered, indicated by the ideograms *146 and *166+WE – the second compound interpreted as an abbreviation of the noun *wehanos* (= ἑανός).⁵⁷

According to the KN Oa 745 [+] 7374 tablet, *Potnia* of the Labyrinth (*da-pu₂-ri-to-jo po-ti-ni-ja*) probably receives 22 pieces of linen⁵⁸ cloth of the *166+WE type in the month

55 For the religious calendar see Boulotis 2000a; Weihartner 2005, 98 (for the Knossian calendar) and 182 (for the Pylian calendar).

56 Lupack 2008, 1.

57 Nosch and Perna 2001, 471.

58 The abbreviation *ri* accompanying the compound ideogram represents the first syllable of the word *ri-ta/λίτα*, flax, or *ri-no/λίнов*, linen.

54 Tournavitou 2012, 727.

a-ka-[-jo-jo.⁵⁹ At least two pieces of cloth *146 are offered to *Enosidao* – most likely another ritual name for *Poseidon* – as recorded on the KN M 719 tablet.⁶⁰ Furthermore, the KN M 729 tablet records a cloth offering of the same type, i.e. *146, probably in relation to *Potnia*.⁶¹

Pieces of cloth of both types *146 and *166+WE, seven and one respectively, are transported to a sanctuary (?) at *ro-u-si-jo a-ko-ro* according to the Pylian tablet PY Ua 1413.⁶² This specific location is also known from the dispatches of perfumed oil.⁶³ Although the sanctuary fulfils tax obligations by producing and sending textiles to the Pylian palace, it appears to receive in turn pieces of cloth from it for ritual reasons.⁶⁴

Two Pylian tablets the PY Un 853 [+] 869 [+] 870 [+] 876⁶⁵ and the PY Un 6⁶⁶ record offerings of cloth as well. On the first tablet the recipient of 18, in all probability, pieces of cloth of type *146 is *Poseidon*. On the second tablet, apart from *Poseidon*, the recipient of 37 pieces of cloth of type *146 and of an unknown number of type *166+WE is *pe-re*-*82, a goddess attested on the famous Pylian tablet PY Tn 316. Furthermore, it should be noted that on both these tablets the divinities receive quantities of wool in addition to finished cloth during the same festival (?) occasion.⁶⁷

Last, but not least, is the controversial *hapax legomenon* *to-no-e-ke-te-ri-jo* of the Pylian tablet PY Fr 1222.⁶⁸ The latter belongs to a class of tablets, which record quantities of perfumed oil offered, for the most part, to goddesses.⁶⁹ Despite widely differing views, almost all scholars regard the disputed word *to-no-e-ke-te-ri-jo* as a compound formed from the words *to-no* and *e-ke-te-ri-jo*, and most accept that it is dative singular in form and refers to a religious festival during which the perfumed oil is offered.⁷⁰ After a thorough examination of the prior interpretations and the written evidence from the 1st millennium BCE Ioannis Promponas identified the first component as the word *to-no* (*θρόνον*, *θρόνον* = decorated garment) and the second as *e-ke-te-ri-jo* (*ἐλκτήριον* = pulling on),⁷¹ an interpretation which still seems, in my opinion, far more plausible than a number of others. In consequence, the word *to-no-e-ke-te-ri-jo* signifies a festival, the ceremonial focus of which is the ritual conveyance and offering of an elaborate *peplos* (= *θρόνον*)⁷² to the two

59 For the transcription of the tablet see Killen and Olivier 1989, 265.

60 Killen and Olivier 1989, 252.

61 Killen and Olivier 1989, 252.

62 Bennett Jr. and Olivier 1973, 237.

63 For the location *ro-u-si-jo a-ko-ro* on the tablets PY Fr 1220 and PY Fr 1226 especially see Bennett Jr. and Olivier 1973, 156–157.

64 Lupack 2008, 105–106, 114.

65 Bennett Jr. and Olivier 1973, 244–245.

66 Bennett Jr. and Olivier 1973, 241.

67 The supply of wool by the central authority to sanctuaries entails the complex question, first raised by the Of series of tablets from Thebes, where quantities of this raw material are sent to the *wo-ko* (= *οἶκος*) of *Potnia*. If indeed the word *οἶκος*, combined with that of its named owner, i.e. *Potnia*, has the meaning of “sanctuary” as has been asserted, then the quantities of wool sent, as with the Pylian evidence, can best be interpreted as offerings. It would not perhaps be too audacious to suggest that, in a context such as this, the wool offered was not just destined for the creation of sacred textiles but for the sacred costume of the goddess herself, which would be woven ritually in the sanctuary. So, for example, we could understand the supply of wool recorded on the TH Of 34 tablet to a woman *a-ra-ka-te-ja* and another *a-pi-qo-ro* – of a unit of “old” wool and three units of “new” wool respectively. This idea is legitimised by the interpretation of *a-pi-qo-ro* (= *ἀμφιπόλος*), identified in Spyropoulos and Chadwick 1975, 90–93 as a member of the priesthood, and is not contradicted by the view expressed in Killen 1985,

295, where *a-ra-ka-te-ja* and *a-pi-qo-ro* are considered to be simple labourers, within the territory of the sanctuary. The same opinion is supported by Tzachili 1997, 132–133, who argues that the two craftswomen carry out separate but complementary tasks: the first cards the wool and perhaps spins the weft threads while the other spins the warp.

68 Bennett Jr. and Olivier 1973, 156.

69 For the tablets of class Fr see Bennett Jr. and Olivier 1973, 155–160, and especially the tablets Fr 1206, Fr 1219, Fr 1222, Fr 1225, Fr 1227, Fr 1228, Fr 1231, Fr 1235, Fr 1236 and Fr 1251.

70 For the different interpretations proposed see Gérard-Rousseau 1968, 224–225 (s.v. *tonoeketerijo*); Aura Jorro 1993, 362 (s.v. *to-no-e-ke-te-ri-jo*).

71 Promponas 1974. He transcribes and interprets *wa-na-so-i to-no-e-ke-te-ri-jo* as *Φανάσσοιῖν* (dative dual of *άνασσαί*) *Θρονοελκτηρίοις* = *Θρονοελκτηρίοις* (dative plural), in order to arrive at the reading of the tablet as follows: “to the two goddesses at the festival of *Θρονοελκτηρίων* (is given or used) oil perfumed with sage, two litres”.

72 The most recent proposal concerning the term *to-no-e-ke-te-ri-jo* is Petrakis 2002–2003, who suggests that the festival is related to the offering of flowers instead of a floral-decorated *peplos*. Despite the fact that flowers would have been a customary ritual offering, well documented iconographically in the Aegean Late Bronze Age, the same can be argued for the robe offerings. Furthermore floral-decorated female dresses have a long tradition in the Aegean at least from the late Middle Bronze Age onwards for which see Boloti (in press, a). And, of course, we cannot ignore the related testimony from *Il.* 22.440–441 when Andromache is informed about the death of her husband “ἀλλ’ ἣ γ’ ἱστὸν ὕφαινε μυχῷ δόμου ὑψηλοῖο δίπλακα πορφυρέην, ἐν δὲ θρόνα ποικίλ’ ἔπασσε” (“but she was weaving a tapestry in the innermost part of the lofty house, a purple tapestry of double fold, and in it she was weaving flowers of varied hue” trans. A.T. Murray).

goddesses, the *wa-na-so-i*, who, according to Promponas, could be identified as Demeter and Kore.⁷³ This interpretation finds its iconographic counterpart in the famous contemporary ivory trio from Mycenae; the pair of women whose shoulders are covered with a single long strip of cloth were identified by Alan Wace as Demeter and Kore as well.⁷⁴

Ritual continuity in the 1st millennium BCE?

The lack of pertinent evidence for about four centuries, from the collapse of the Mycenaean world until the late 8th century BCE, could possibly be spanned by the well-known Homeric passage (*Iliad*, 6.288–304), referring to Hecuba's offering of an elaborate *peplos* to the goddess Athena. If so, are we entitled to support the continuity of this particular ritual from the 2nd to the 1st millennium BCE?

Undoubtedly the aforementioned passage from the *Iliad*, referring to Hecuba's offering – a cultic act accomplished by the priestess Theano⁷⁵ – provides a ritual link between the 2nd and the 1st millennium BCE. Although the Homeric term *peplos* does not occur in Linear B tablets⁷⁶ and its relationship with the Mycenaean *wehanos*, which was also offered to sanctuaries/gods, remains dubious,⁷⁷ it indicates indubitably the same religious practice.

Although several scholars from the 1970s onwards highlighted the lack of continuity in the archaeological record and challenged the methodological basis on which arguments for continuity in religious traditions were founded,⁷⁸ it is undeniable that cloth and/or clothing offerings to the gods, either private or public, prove to have been particularly widespread, in space and time, in the Hellenic world of the 1st millennium BCE.⁷⁹ According to primarily written evidence this ritual practice is attested in honour of both female and male divinities: of Athena in Athens,⁸⁰ Tegea⁸¹ and Argos,⁸² Artemis *Brauronia* in

Athens,⁸³ Hera in Olympia⁸⁴ and Mycenae,⁸⁵ Demeter *Thesmophoros* in Arcadia,⁸⁶ Persephone in Mantinea,⁸⁷ Poseidon in Elis,⁸⁸ *Aotis* (Artemis?)⁸⁹ and Amyklaean Apollo in Sparta,⁹⁰ as well as Artemis *Leukophryenes* in Magnesia of Asia Minor.⁹¹

In fact, the ritual continuity detected from the Aegean 2nd to the 1st millennium BCE is apparently due to the same Greek-speaking population, which, despite the major socio-political changes after the fall of the Mycenaean palatial system, continued, to a great extent, its traditional religious life with beliefs and cult practices deeply rooted in the collective behaviour. The Linear B tablets offer in this respect relevant evidence concerning not only the *pantheon*, but also the priesthood, the establishment of a religious calendar, specific festivals and sacrificial practices, most of which have good parallels in the forms of religious expression of the 1st millennium BCE. In such a cultural-religious frame, ceremonies focused on the dedication of sacral garments to divinities, as customary religious acts of great importance for the cohesion and the identity of a community,⁹² would never cease to be exercised, even if their concept was, in some cases, modified.

Although the religious continuity from the Bronze to the Early Iron Age remains one of the thorniest issues in Greek archaeology,⁹³ the view that historical Greek religion originated in the Bronze Age is still influential.⁹⁴ Even before the decipherment of Linear B, Nilsson and Demargne emphasised that the offering of a saffron-coloured *peplos* to Athena during the Panathenaic Festival was not merely the same kind of ritual, but likely a continuation of Bronze Age practice.⁹⁵ Given the evidence, I am inclined to agree.

73 Promponas 1974, 103–105.

74 Wace 1949, 83 and 86, pl. 101–103.

75 For a thorough investigation of the Homeric priestess Theano and her role, see Nosch 2007.

76 Nosch 2007, 173.

77 The relationship between the Homeric term *peplos* and the Mycenaean term *wehanos*, whether they were identical or different textile types is discussed in, among others, Nosch 2007, 173–174. As noted *ibid.*, the first option was already suggested by Perry in 1898.

78 Desborough 1964; Snodgrass 2000; Coldstream 2003.

79 Rouse 1976, 274–277; Reuthner 2006, 267–320; Brøns 2015 (with emphasis on the related epigraphic evidence).

80 Promponas 1974, 77–85; Rouse 1976, 276; See more recently Mansfield 1985; Barber 1992; Reuthner 2006, 295–320.

81 Rouse 1976, 275.

82 Promponas 1974, 97–98.

83 Woodward 1963, especially 180–182 with a note on the *Brauroneion* inventories. For the treasure records of *Artemis Brauronia* in Athens see Linders 1972; On the clothing catalogues from the Sanctuary of Artemis at Brauron representing a practice associated with a cult of great importance to women, briefly mentioned by Euripides in his *Iphigeneia in Tauris* (1446–67), see Cleland 2005; See also Reuthner 2006, 271–274.

84 Nilsson 1906, 62–63; Rouse 1976, 277.

85 Promponas 1974, 76; Paus. II.17, 6.

86 Promponas 1974, 75–76.

87 Promponas 1974, 96.

88 Rouse 1976, 275; Paus. VI 25, 5–6.

89 Rouse 1976, 275–276.

90 Rouse 1976, 277; Paus. III. 16.2

91 Promponas 1974, 76.

92 Tzachili 1997, 272; Scheid and Svenbro 2003, 17–30.

93 See for example the controversial case of the Sanctuary of Demeter at Eleusis, a major Greek sanctuary for which a Mycenaean ancestry has been claimed, discussed in Cosmopoulos 2014.

94 Nilsson 1950, 466–483; Burkert 1985, 47–53.

95 Warren 1988, 22.z

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What does the clothing say about the killer? Some thoughts on textiles in depictions of sacrifice in Archaic Athens

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Attic vase paintings allow us to understand what clothing may have signified in cultic contexts in the 6th century BCE. Indeed, any detail featuring a vase painting points to a general discourse about reality, rather than to reality itself. Clothing, especially, may be seen as a polysemic sign used to express various thoughts about the function and meaning of cults in Athenian Archaic society.

Numerous images of cults painted on Attic Archaic vases show at least one moment of the Greek ceremony named *thusia*, which will be called “sacrifice” for our purposes.¹ During this ceremony, which may begin with a solemn procession, an animal victim is ritually slain and its carcass butchered to be shared between gods and mortals. Some parts are roasted for the gods, others are boiled and roasted to be eaten by mortals – some may even be taken away to be eaten later somewhere else.

Numerous scholars have developed theories to interpret the meaning of the whole set of gestures that could be combined during a Greek sacrifice. Walter Burkert, especially, following Karl Meuli, argues that these gestures would help people to forget about the violence of sacrificial killing, which would be compared to murder if the victims were not ritually slain.² Jean-Louis Durand expresses similar thoughts in his scholarship on Attic Bouphonia.³ According to him, images of victims driving themselves towards sacrifice, systematic refusal to picture the moment

the victim is slain, as well as myths justifying sacrifices of domestic animals suggest that people of the ancient world tried to avoid feeling guilty of murder during ritual killing. On the other hand, theories from the Parisian school of anthropology, around Jean-Pierre Vernant and Marcel Detienne, deal with the moments that follow the killing, presenting sacrifice as a matter of butchery and cooking.⁴ This is not the place to discuss the problems raised by the theories about Greek sacrifice,⁵ but it shall be pointed out that Attic documents are usually considered as sources speaking for the entire Greek world, and that Archaic and later sources are generally studied together, as if Greek sacrifice had not changed in hundreds of years.

No theory has so far been developed from a careful study of clothing in the images of sacrifice. However, such a study would help us to understand, in an original way, what Archaic Athenians thought about their own rituals. Depictions of sacrifice display considerable variety from the Archaic period onwards. As women do not appear in these images as often as men, reflecting the fact that they generally play a minor role in the ceremony, we shall concentrate on men’s clothing in order to develop a better understanding of what the choice of clothing reveals about the ideas that

1 A large selection of such images is presented in van Straten 1995 and an even larger one in Gebauer 2002.

2 Cf. Burkert 1983, to be compared with Vernant 1981.

3 Durand 1986.

4 See especially Berthiaume and Detienne 1982; Detienne and Vernant 1979.

5 Cf. Patera 2012, 9–15: the introduction summarises and reviews the major theories developed about Greek sacrifice in the 20th century.

the painters and their audience, projected over the ritual killing and sharing of a sacrificial victim.⁶

To begin with, studying men's garments in images of sacrifice suggests that, in Archaic Athens, sacrificial ceremony is not necessarily linked to any prestige display through clothing.⁷ Apart from particular clothes such as the ceremonial costume of musicians or the military panoply, Attic Archaic painters distinguish between three scenarios of male dress for sacrifices: 1) sacrifices where men all wear the same simple clothes, or appear naked, 2) sacrifices where men all wear more elaborate clothes, and 3) sacrifices where some wear simple and others more elaborate clothes. It shall be noted that in most cases men appear naked, or wearing a loincloth, or a simple *himation* over a naked body. The *himation* covering a *chiton* or even the *chitoniskos* often appears more elaborate, and hence decorated textiles are primarily attested on these costumes.

The elaborate costumes occur less often than the plainest ones. Sacrifice seems to have been more often represented as an occasion to dress quite simply, and less often as a proper place to display one's prestige through elaborate clothing. The occurrences of elaborate clothes on images of sacrifice raise more questions, as nothing proves that these clothes signify high social status. For instance, a black-figure band cup of the middle of the 6th century BCE shows a procession towards an altar; behind the altar stands a woman in front of a statue of Athena Promachos; she shakes hands with the man leading the procession (Fig. 2.1).⁸ Both the woman behind the altar and the man leading the procession wear garments that are obviously different from the ones worn by the other characters. In both cases, the distinct garment underlines the prominent position in the frame, and both signs point towards a higher importance. Indeed, it is generally accepted that the woman is a priestess, and it has been argued that the man may be some official, perhaps with both political and religious privileges, like the Athenian *Basileus*.⁹ However, the image itself gives no clue about the actual meaning of the distinctive male clothing: it can mean high social or political status, but it can just as well point towards high religious status, or even high religious

status linked to high social status.¹⁰ The same conclusions may be drawn about processions where all attendants wear elaborate garments.¹¹ They may represent aristocratic sacrificial processions, or processions of ritual officials, but they may just as well merely express the idea of a beautiful, solemn ceremony.

It would be tempting to think that elaborate garments rendered in vase paintings do not indicate social prestige, either because they rather indicate religious prestige, or because they do not point towards prestige at all, and to then suggest that in 6th-century, post-Solonian Athens, where features of the later Periclean democracy settle step by step, people preferred to depict their sacrifices as ceremonies where social status would not be displayed. Reality must of course have been more complex. Nevertheless, the fact that plain garments occur far more often in images of sacrifice may testify that the ceremony was more eagerly pictured as a place where social differences were hidden rather than displayed through clothing.¹²

This may be compared to what is known about clothes worn to honour the gods in Archaic Greece.¹³ According to Herodotus, people could attend a religious ceremony with the most beautiful outfits: in order to offer to his deceased wife the finest clothes possessed by Corinthian women, the tyrant Periander invites them to join a religious ceremony, persuaded that women will come with precious garments; he is not mistaken.¹⁴ Even if in some cases religious ceremonies could have been an occasion to display prestige through clothing, choosing what to wear to honour the gods would have been influenced by social norms including the value of modesty.

6 For overview and comparative study of representation of women in Attic images of cult practices, see Connelly 2007; Kaltsas *et al.* 2008.

7 The idea of religious ceremonies as occasions to display prestige or to control prestige display was first developed in Mills 1984. The author makes clear that "chronology problems will not be a primary concern" (257), and her conclusions mostly rely on Classical and Hellenistic testimonies. It will be shown here that Archaic sources can only lead to more nuanced hypotheses.

8 Private collection, Gebauer 2002, 683, fig. 3.

9 Hypotheses are discussed in Gebauer 2002, 28–34.

10 Cf. Ober 1989, 57–58: control over religion may have helped Athenian aristocrats to maintain their political power in the context of an emerging "egalitarian" democracy.

11 For instance, see Berlin, Staatliche Museen, inv. no. F 1690, Gebauer 2002, 684, fig. 5, or Munich, Antikensammlungen, inv. no. 1441, Gebauer 2002, 685, fig. 9.

12 These thoughts about vase paintings should be compared with the conclusions about Archaic sculpture presented in von den Hoff 2008, 110: the fact that portraits of cult officials are lacking from Archaic Athens suggests that "in this *polis*, cult officials did not choose to represent themselves or to publicly define their status in this way during the Archaic period, even if concern with cult status was not entirely excluded from the competitive practices of Athenian aristocrats. Nevertheless, the prestige associated with cult and ritual itself was high".

13 Cf. Lee 2015, 214–218. The authors give a general account of what is known about proscriptions and prescriptions of dress in Greek sanctuaries, and about the dress of religious officials from the Archaic to the Roman period. This useful synthetic discussion can be used to look for parallels, but does not in itself account for the peculiarities of Archaic testimonies.

14 Her. 5.92.

H. Mills reminds us that displaying prestige through clothing was regulated from the 6th century BCE onwards.¹⁵ A sumptuary law attributed to Solon and dealing with garments appropriate for funerals, unfortunately only known from later sources, offers the best example.¹⁶ Archaic sumptuary laws restricting prestige display through clothing in a religious context are lacking. One could only mention an Arcadian regulation from the end of the 6th century.¹⁷ Some details of the inscription are still unclear, but it seems to oblige women who wear varicoloured or embroidered garments¹⁸ while honouring Demeter Thesmophoros to offer them to the goddess:

“If any woman anywhere shall be wearing a brightly coloured robe, it is to be consecrated to Demeter Thesmophoros. If she does not consecrate the garment, let her, being unfriendly as regards a sacrificial garment, be outlawed, and let whoever is Demiurgos pay out thirty drachmas. If the Demiurgos does not pay, or if he does not have authority over the impious act, ten years shall be the duration of the curse in this latter event.”¹⁹

Later regulations state that white is appropriate for cult practices,²⁰ but it seems unlikely that the aim of the Archaic statement was to have women dress in white. Indeed, the etymological meaning of the adjective used to describe the garments suggests that the regulation only concerns varicoloured or embroidered pieces: plain robes could have

been worn without being consecrated.²¹ It is often stated that the regulation forbids women to wear a prohibited garment. If these garments were considered luxury items, it would be the only known Archaic text regulating prestige display through clothing in a religious context. On the other hand, if the garments were forbidden because they were considered inappropriate for cult practices, then the text would be the only known Archaic example of clothing regulation linked to ritual purity concerns. However, the inscription does not contain any of the known Greek prohibition formulas, and it is far from being as explicit as other regulations from later periods, strictly forbidding individuals from wearing specific types of clothing, either because they are considered expensive,²² or because they can pollute a sanctuary.²³ The Archaic regulation says nothing about how precious or how impure the incriminating garments may be. It is only stated that the clothes, if worn, have to be consecrated. The fact that they need to be offered to the goddess suggests that they were *agalmata*, thought to please her. Perhaps the aim of the law is not to influence women’s clothing habits, but only to make sure that offerings that could please the goddess shall belong to her. The woman “being unfriendly as regards a sacrificial garment” or “ill disposed towards the ritual” would not be the woman who wears inappropriate clothes, but the woman who refuses to offer the goddess what belongs to her, after having proved publicly that she owns such *agalma*. In that case, the 6th-century regulation would officially enforce habits that are known throughout the entire Greek world from the 8th century: highly valued or prestige objects are more and more eagerly dedicated in sanctuaries, which gradually concentrate a huge amount of wealth.²⁴

Archaic sources do not tell us how people actually dressed, but give an insight into the written or unwritten rules that could have influenced clothing for ritual practices. It may have depended on the need to display prestige, on the necessity to obey social norms of moderation, and perhaps even on the idea that fabrics that could please the gods would

15 Mills 1984.

16 Plut., *Sol.* 25.1.

17 Robinson 1943. His interpretations are reviewed in Beattie 1947. Commentaries concerning the problematic religious aspects discussed here can be found in Sokolowski 1962, 71; Mills 1984; Dubois 1986, 195–202; Thür and Taeuber 1994, 269–273. Some scholars have expressed doubts about the Arcadian origin of the inscription, cf. Jost 1985, 325–326. However, the specialist in the Arcadian dialect, Laurent Dubois, supports Margherita Guarducci’s and Lilian H. Jeffery’s attribution of the text to the Arcadian city of Pheneos, cf. Jeffery 1949, 30–31; Guarducci 1959–60, 239–242; Dubois 1986, 197.

18 The editor of the inscription supposes that it concerns garments from the town of Deraia, cf. Robinson 1943, 193–194. This interpretation is generally not admitted. Dubois hesitates between Michel Lejeune’s and Arthur James Beattie’s hypothesis: according to him the garments mentioned could be either embroidered, made of the skin of wild animals, or even be from the Island of Thera, cf. Dubois 1986, 197–198. Beattie’s hypothesis of a varicoloured or embroidered garment seems more satisfying, since it relies on parallel inscriptions mentioning similar garments, cf. Beattie 1947, 67–68.

19 Trans. Beattie 1947.

20 A set of examples is discussed in Gawlinski 2012.

21 Considering that the law indeed concerns hide garments or even Therean garments, one is led to similar conclusions.

22 The Arcadian Hellenistic regulation *IG V²*, 514, from Lykosoura, explicitly forbids anyone entering the Sanctuary of Despoina to wear gold, purple fabrics, etc. As is the case in the Archaic regulation, prohibited clothes have to be consecrated to the goddess.

23 Compare Sokolowski 1969, 33. The 3rd century regulation from Patras prescribes purification ceremonies in case someone had defiled the sanctuary by wearing a forbidden garment.

24 Claude Rolley gives an account of the archaeological evidence of the fact that from the 8th century onwards, objects of great value are no longer placed in aristocratic tombs, but in sanctuaries, Rolley 1983.



Figure 2.1. Attic black-figure cup, Stavros Niarchos private collection, 575–525 BCE (after Gebauer 2002, 683, fig. 3).

rather have been dedicated than worn.²⁵ Thus, the way Attic vase painters depict, through the choice of clothes, social values attached to sacrifice seems not to have been too far from what is attested elsewhere in Archaic Greece.

Sacrifice may have been an occasion where common social values could be displayed, but it is first and foremost a religious ceremony, and Attic vase painters present sacrifice as an occasion during which religious hierarchies can be exhibited. Indeed, among the attendants who may play a role during the ceremony, the ones who handle offerings seem more important than others. The way painters use clothing to distinguish those attendants suggests that, in a society which tries not to represent social hierarchies, cultic hierarchies are respected.

Depictions of the long loose ungirdled *chiton* suggest some tension between images where cultic hierarchies are emphasised and images where the most important roles seem to be shared among equals. In the Archaic period, this garment is always worn by characters who can be securely

identified as priests.²⁶ These characters are represented leading a procession²⁷ or pouring a libation over the “sacrificial fire”, where the gods’ share is burned and the *splanchna* roasted.²⁸ In one case, the long, loose, ungirdled *chiton* seems to be worn by a man holding a knife and explicitly named “priest”.²⁹ In one other Archaic depiction, it may be a priest who holds the sacrificial knife. On a black-figure amphora from the middle of the 6th century, a man wearing a short, ungirdled *chiton* slits a bovine’s throat with a knife, while nine other naked men are busy lifting the victim high, holding it still, or approaching the celebrant that shall receive its blood (Fig. 2.2).³⁰ The *chiton* of the man holding the knife seems to be too short to be seen as a sacerdotal garment. And if length is indeed a criterion, this example would remind us that the priests were far from the only ones who could handle the sacrificial knife in Archaic Greece. Indeed, in the only Archaic text that describes what

25 Ritual purity concerns will not be discussed here, since the Archaic evidence of clothing related to ritual purity is very scanty. Only Hom., *Od.* 4.759–769 and 17.46–60, suggests that a clean garment, whatever shall be the garment’s form, colour, or value, can help a ritual be successful, but it does not seem mandatory at all. Compare *Il.* 6.285–312.

26 Mantis 1990.

27 Paris, Louvre, inv. no. F 10, Gebauer 2002, 683, fig. 2.

28 Oxford, Ashmolean Museum, inv. no. 1911.617, Gebauer 2002, 761, fig. 244.

29 Rome, Museo Nazionale Etrusco di Villa Giulia, no inv. no.

30 Viterbo, Museo Civico, no inv. no, Gebauer 2002, 726, fig. 134.



Figure 2.2. Attic black-figure amphora, Viterbo, Museo Civico, no inv. no., 550–500 BCE (after Gebauer 2002, 726, fig. 134).

could have been a sacerdotal function during sacrifice, the priest says the prayer, pours the libation over the sacrificial fire, but does not seem to slay any victim himself.³¹ The fact that characters in sacerdotal robes are more often depicted leading a procession or pouring a libation than slaying a victim suggests that the latter function may have been seen as less important, less representative, or even rather new. Priest or no priest, the man handling the knife could have been clearly distinguished from the other participants through his garment: painters would eagerly have used distinctive clothing to highlight a prominent cultic function.

Actually, no known Archaic document proves that the long, loose, ungirdled *chiton* was the actual garment worn by priests when officiating. It could have been a mere iconographic convention, allowing painters to represent a priest without any possible confusion in scenes where a priest was required. Indeed, characters not dressed in sacerdotal garments are pictured leading processions, pouring libations, or even handling sacrificial knives. For instance, on a black-figure amphora from 530–520 BCE, a man in a decorated *himation* over a *chiton* leads a procession

towards an altar.³² He is probably not meant to be a priest, as there is a priestess welcoming the procession behind the altar. In an Early Classical vase painting, a man in *himation* pours a libation over the sacrificial fire burning on a herm's altar, while younger men deal with other offerings.³³ The man pouring a libation is probably not a priest: no priest ever appears in images of sacrifice honouring a herm. Finally, on a red-figure cup from the second half of the 6th century, the young man in loin-cloth handling the knives does not seem to have a different status from the five other, naked men who hold the victim still (Fig. 2.3).³⁴ As there is no need to be a priest to perform priestly functions, a specific conventional sign was required to mark a character as a priest without any possible confusion.

On the other hand, however, priestesses are not pictured in any specific garment. The elegant clothes they often wear in vase paintings are not necessarily used to denote their sacerdotal function: priestesses are usually positioned nearest

³¹ Hom., *Il.* 1.446–474.

³² Munich, Antikensammlungen, inv. no. 1441, Gebauer 2002, 685, fig. 9.

³³ Naples, Museo Archeologico Nazionale, inv. no. 127929, Gebauer 2002, 759, fig. 240.

³⁴ Florence, Museo Archeologico, inv. no. 81600, Gebauer 2002, 727, fig. 136.



Figure 2.3. Attic red-figure cup, Florence, Museo archeologico Etrusco, inv. no. 81600 (after Gebauer 2002, 727, fig. 136).

or behind the altar and the divinity, a position that does not support any other identification. The elegant garment of priestesses only underlines a prominent cultic function, which other signs have made obvious.³⁵ The same could be said about priests. One of the oldest images of sacrifice shows, behind the altar the procession approaching, with a man holding a horn.³⁶ He is dressed in *himation* and *chiton*, as are other attendants. It has been argued that the man with the horn should be similar to the *komasts* who also hold horns in contemporary scenes.³⁷ However, he stands behind an altar, just as the priestesses do, and this allows us to interpret him as someone having an official cultic charge. If so, then the sacerdotal garment would seem useless as long as other signs mark the man out as a priest, as is the case for priestesses, and the hypothesis of the sacerdotal male garment as a mere iconographic convention would be strengthened.

The long, loose, untied *chiton* could have been, or not have been, the actual garment worn by Athenian priests performing priestly functions. The fact that it occurs in some images, however, testifies that sometimes painters needed to represent a priest: the presence of a priest could have been considered necessary for some sacrifices – but not all. In at least one case, the possible priest is dressed as the other attendants. This would express the fact that

before having a major cultic function, the priest would be a citizen among others.

Occurrences of the sacerdotal garment in images of sacrifice reveal two opposite conceptions. On one hand, clothing can underline a more important cultic function. What is true of priests and priestesses is also true of characters that are not undoubtedly marked as priests, but still wear a garment that distinguishes them from others, like the alleged *Basileus* from the image discussed above.³⁸ In this exceptional representation, religious hierarchies are notably structured and presented: the closer a character is to the altar, the more important his role during the ceremony shall be, and the more elaborate clothing he wears. On the other hand, other images show the sacrifice as a ceremony where honours are shared among equals, especially when the ceremony honours a herm. On a black-figure neck amphora from the end of the 6th century, two men, with identical beards and garments, honour a herm.³⁹ One holds the sacrificial basket,⁴⁰ the other leads the victim. Both hold twigs. There is no hierarchical difference between those two equal men, each in charge of a particular kind of offering. Sacrifice can be pictured as a religious ceremony where

35 Cp. Private collection, Gebauer 2002, 683, fig. 3, and Berlin, Antikensammlung, inv. no. 1896, Gebauer 2002, 685, fig. 8.

36 Tarento, Museo Nazionale Archeologico, inv. no. I. G. 4346, Gebauer 2002, 683, fig. 1.

37 For a full discussion of the evidence, see Gebauer 2002, 25–26.

38 Private collection, Gebauer 2002, 683, fig. 3. A parallel example would be Athens, National Museum, Acropolis collection, inv. no. 2298, Gebauer 2002, 695, fig. 39.

39 Art market, Gebauer 2002, 693, fig. 31.

40 About the identification of the three-handled basket as a “sacrificial basket” used to carry offerings and equipment needed for sacrifice, see Richter 1926, the more recent study presented in Schelp 1975, and the developments in van Straten 1995, 162–164.

religious hierarchies are respected and displayed, but also as a meeting where the parity among citizens of the emerging democracy can be stressed.

Finally, sacrifice is thought of as a religious ceremony expressing human concerns. And indeed, the sacred offering is also a matter of butchery. Again, clothing helps painters depict this ambivalence, especially with clothing attributed to attendants who lead victims, who deal with the killing, who take care of carcasses, and who roast *splanchna* over the sacrificial fire. These attendants are usually dressed in the same way: they are either naked, or wearing a garment light enough to be taken off easily or at least allowing one to move freely, such as a plain loin-cloth or a *himation*. These clothes seem to be as appropriate as nudity for tasks that appear violent, arduous, and dirty, as is the case in some images.

Firstly, even if in some Archaic images victims seem to walk willingly towards their own sacrifice,⁴¹ in many other depictions they seem to refuse to keep walking or and sometimes try fleeing. In order to control them, attendants in charge need to be strong enough and to wear clothes light enough to let them handle the situation. And indeed, in such cases, the costume generally attested is one of the light plain ones mentioned above, including nudity.⁴² In some cases, however, people in more elaborate garments lead victims. Explaining these exceptions can offer a better understanding of the ambiguity of Archaic Athenian sacrifice. For example, on a black-figure amphora mentioned above, a sheep walks calmly next to an attendant dressed in an elaborate costume of a decorated *himation* over a *chiton*.⁴³ A closer look reveals that the elegantly dressed man does not lead the victim. It proceeds willingly and calm, neither bound nor urged by a stick nor pushed by a hand grasping its horn (the closest hand holds an *oinochoe*). On another black-figure amphora from the middle of the 6th century, a piglet in a sacrificial procession is not led but carried by a man wearing a decorated *himation* over a *chiton*.⁴⁴ This image may be compared to contemporary ones, where a man dressed in a plain loin-cloth or *himation* tied round the waist, roughly holds a piglet chosen for sacrifice by one leg.⁴⁵ In comparison, the way the piglet is held here shows

no sign of violence, and even seems tender. These examples suggest that, instead of light plain clothes, that may point towards the violence of the procession, elaborate costumes can be a part of a system of signs concealing any form of sacrificial violence. Painters have pictured both violent and tranquil ceremonies.

However, plain garments may also be worn by attendants even when leading the victim do not look difficult, for instance on a fragment from a black-figure *dinos* of the middle of the 6th century.⁴⁶ Here again, the victims seem to lead themselves. The loincloths worn by the men walking beside them may not be linked to a painful procession, but can function as signs of the future killing or butchering of the victims, which can also be a difficult moment. And indeed, one of them carries knives. In fact, contrary to what Durand has stated, vase painters have pictured sacrificial killings, and even violent ones, at least in the Archaic period. No such image is known from the Classical period. It is true that the actual killing of the victim was rarely represented, but that does not automatically mean that the depiction of it was taboo. In an image commented on above, nine naked men are needed to lift a bovine and hold it still while its throat is slit.⁴⁷ In another one, five naked young men have trouble restraining a bovine while a young attendant in a loincloth prepares the knives.⁴⁸ A *himation* suspended in the frame suggests that one young man even had to undress before dealing with the victim. These pictures show how difficult and violent the killing can be, especially when the victim is a large animal. The nakedness or light garments of the attendants seem to be, in both cases, the most appropriate wear. But attendants may also wear light clothes even when killing does not have to be particularly difficult, for instance when the victim is a much smaller animal.⁴⁹ While choosing such clothes, painters could have pictured even easy killings as somehow hard or dirty.

Nudity or light clothing seems to be appropriate in depictions of men busy with carcasses and meat. A Late Archaic image shows harsh contrast between a priest in a brightly decorated sacerdotal garment holding a *kantharos* to pour a libation, and his attendant in loincloth roasting *splanchna*⁵⁰ (this contrast alone may suggest that the priest is not supposed to handle bloody matter). Again, there are

41 For example in the images of *Bouphonia*, such as Munich, Antikensammlungen, inv. no. 1824, Gebauer 2002, 713, fig. 90.

42 For instance Tampa, Tampa Museum of Art, inv. no. 86.52, Gebauer 2002, 710, fig. 81; Stuttgart, Württembergisches Landesmuseum, inv. no. KAS 74, Gebauer 2002, 709, fig. 80.

43 Munich, Antikensammlungen, inv. no. 1441, Gebauer 2002, 685, fig. 9.

44 Berlin, Antikensammlung, inv. no. F 1690, Gebauer 2002, 684, fig. 5.

45 Art market, Gebauer 2002, 706, fig. 68; Berlin, Antikensammlung, inv. no. 1962.62, Gebauer 2002, 706,

fig. 69.

46 Athens, National Museum, Acropolis collection, inv. no. 607, Gebauer 2002, 684, fig. 4.

47 Viterbo, Museo Civico, no inv. no, Gebauer 2002, 726, fig. 134.

48 Florence, Museo Archeologico, inv. no. 81600, Gebauer 2002, 727, fig. 136.

49 Paris, Louvre, inv. no. G 112, Gebauer 2002, 727, fig. 135.

50 Palermo, Museo Archeologico, inv. no. V 661a, Gebauer 2002, 759, fig. 238.

exceptions that require an explanation. On a black-figure column krater from the second half of the 6th century, two attendants dressed in decorated *chitoniskos* deal with sacrificial meat in front of a herm.⁵¹ The first one roasts the *splanchna*, the second one cuts small pieces of meat over a table. Some distinctive parts of the former victims are displayed in the frame, such as its head below the table, behind which lies a sacrificial basket. The painter obviously depicts sacrifice for what it is: the killing and butchery of a domestic animal. However, the presence of a sacrificial basket is enough to emphasise that the victim was ritually consecrated. Thus, the beauty of the clothes, far more elegant than the plain loincloth usually depicted, can function as another sign concealing the violence and reminding us of the solemnity of the ceremony.

Through clothing, vase painters reveal the ambivalence of sacrifice in Archaic Athens. To sacrifice, violence must be somehow inflicted on a chosen animal victim, and some kind of dirty work must be done. The violence and dirt are sometimes expressed, and accepted, without taboo, at least in the Archaic period. However, the fact that painters also do their best to banish all traces of violence or dirt from their pictures suggests that even if it is ritual, killing an animal may have aroused disturbing emotions that people tried to conceal.⁵² Huge gaps in our documentation can account for the differences between Archaic and Classical images of sacrifice, but it is also possible that, among the opposite thoughts about sacrifice displayed in earlier documents, the one idea that would become dominant in the Classical period is that the guilt of performing a sacrificial killing had to be dispelled.⁵³

The thoughts developed here are not intended to shape an interpretative system that would be too strict, but to

try to define a framework that could help us understand how painters used clothing as a polysemic sign, and what discourses it is used to build. Through clothes used as signs, and through the possible dialogue with other signs, Attic Archaic vase painters have depicted sacrifice both as a sacred ceremony and as a feast for mortals. Vase painters' depictions of sacrifice respect religious hierarchies, but also assert the norms and values of an emerging "egalitarian" post-Solonian Athens. Painters also attempted to depict both the sacred and merely pragmatic aspects of sacrifice by showing that the solemn ceremony can be a violent matter of blood and butchery – from which priests might have stood away. Sacrificial violence could have been shown and accepted, but from the Archaic period onwards, it seems appropriate to conceal it. It is not possible to determine whether such Athenian testimony may reveal the thoughts of the whole Archaic Greek world. However, it still alerts us to the fact that the discourse the Greeks built over their own sacrifice could have evolved during almost one entire millennium of history, as could have the ceremony itself.

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- 51 London, British Museum, inv. no. B 362, Gebauer 2002, 736, fig. 123. Van Straten dates the vase to the period from 540 to 520 BCE, but Gebauer rather dates it to 520–500 BCE.
- 52 Stella Georgoudi has rightly demonstrated that the idea of a systematic concealment of the guilt inspired by sacrificial killings was not relevant, see Georgoudi 2005. However, we shall not go as far as to consider that the ancient Greeks were never bothered by the violence of sacrificial killings, and did not think that the difference between sacrifice and murder had to be made obvious, because it was not.
- 53 In this perspective, it shall also be noted that depictions of knives carried in a procession without being hidden in the sacrificial basket are known from the Archaic, but not from later periods. Cf. Athens, National Museum, Acropolis collection, inv. no. 2473, discussed above. In Classical Athens, during the procession, the knives were to be hidden in the sacrificial basket, as described in Ar., *Pax* 947 or Eur., *El.* 810–811. The Archaic vase discussed here, as well as Homeric depictions of sacrifice, suggest that the concern about hiding the knives in a basket during the procession may not have been a major one in the Archaic period.

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Not nothing: Conceptualising textile whiteness for cult practice

Liza Cleland

Whiteness has long been regarded – consciously or unconsciously – as the truism of Greek dress. Today, of course, it is equally a truism within the field that the clothing of the ancient Greeks was not (universally or routinely) white. Yet we are still at the stage where this requires assertion, and likely to remain so as long as the colours of Greece are regarded by some as an edifying “discovery”.¹

Routine assumptions are supported by whiteness being a contested quality in our own cultures: something to “move beyond”. Modern associations of whiteness in dress (simplicity, asceticism, purity, virginity) are as problematic as they are routine. Thus, the contempt of familiarity can make it natural to assume historical whiteness as a known quantity,² in favour of investigating “colour” meanings and manufacture. I argue that this is mistaken, on both historiographic and technical grounds.

It is modern, not 1st-millennium, assumptions and techniques which predispose us to see textile whiteness as a state of *baseline* “purity”. One can argue, too, that it is modern associations which predispose us to see whiteness as (at least provisionally) inherent to cult textiles, rather than problematise its place in cult practices and their wider contexts. Yet, in the 1st millennium, there is good evidence that whiteness was not a default. It was an active, created, intentional quality in dress practice, both within and beyond the sanctuary.

I think everyone with an interest in ancient Greek textiles has some sort of “eureka” moment relating to the colours of clothing: a moment where the familiar monochromy of timeworn sources begins to suggest the “colours of life”.³ For me, it was cultic clothing regulations which opened up the world of colour, pattern, texture, meaning and manufacture for investigation. But none of these 1st-millennium qualities could be fully understood against whiteness as the baseline state of fabric it has become today. Only in the intervening millennia has humanity developed ways of standardising colours. Only in that process could white become the touchstone for textiles.

Of course, white fabric was prized as a superior foundation for dyes, and valued as such. Animals and plants have been bred to deliver this ground, bleaches and processes invented for it, fibres eventually created for it.⁴ (Chemical mastery of colour has transcended this consideration only recently, with the ability to manipulate the self-colour of synthetic fibres.) In this long process, white also became the litmus

1 “Who Were the Greeks?” 2013, Tern TV, I. Jenkins interviewed by M. Scott. I would like to thank the editors for inviting this contribution, and Sara Karatas for her support and for making available a variety of research materials to lessen the impact of my physical isolation.

2 *E.g.* Lee 2015, 215–222; Gawlinski 2012, 117, 131; Jones 1999, 251. Lee provides an excellent basic summary of the scholarship, but assumes white as a universal/stable category unproblematically applicable to textiles (and fibres, *e.g.* n. 101 “linen ... was valued for its whiteness”.) Even that whiteness was neither universal nor inherent, Cleland 2003, 210, and one can equally well argue the circle the other way: perhaps white was required for ritual because undergarments (singular, vs. multiple outer layers; clean because frequently washed, being both easier to clean and closer to the body; vegetal, not tainted by animal mortality) were linen? I do not make that argument, but it is certainly available.

3 Greenberg 2008.

4 Cleland 2003, 206–216.

fabric of textile cleanliness; in medicine, food preparation, hospitality and sport, “whites” became *the* index.⁵

Yet an index cannot also be an active or aspirational quality; it must be fixed, and seen as reliable. Such “seeing as” is important. White fabric has always been most visibly stainable with both dye and dirt.⁶ But this does not mean whiteness has always been a reliable quality in fabrics.⁷ When we read back white-reliability onto the past, we impose an anachronism which fundamentally interferes with potential understanding of most aspects of textile practices.

This can be particularly problematic when we are deducing from cult practice to wider norms (as we often are, since the cultic context goes some way to rendering the volume of evidence for dress manageable).⁸ Ritual contexts generally intensify the reading of dress (at the time and as history) while inevitably privileging some aspects over others. There is, then, a particular danger that certain self-reinforcing assumptions become magnified, stretching even the frame, and not only the detail, of inferred dress practices.

I use the term “practices” advisedly, because textiles – particularly as worn on the body, but also as aspects of private and public life – offer a fascinating nexus of material, socio-economic and aesthetic (therefore also philosophical and abstract) culture. As such, they can never be effectively investigated from one perspective alone, or indeed, fully conceptualised as static or codified.

It is important that this nexus was specific in the 1st millennium, and has itself been subject to revolutionary paradigm change recently. Only within the past century have we – in some cultures – become purely consumers over producers of textile artefacts. The impact of this change (on economies, on work, on daily-life, on self-presentation and

status) is so vast as to be barely comprehensible, and remains as yet minimally analysed or objectively understood.⁹ What we do know, and must recognise, is that our “free” – our infinite, repeated, routine – exercise of choice of textiles is uniquely modern. So too is our freedom from responsibility to their life-cycles (in which white was once but one fleeting stage).

These freedoms are what makes us able to imagine textiles “starting out” white. They are what allow us to view white cloth as “naturally” naïve/simple. And they are what gives us the luxury of dirtying “whites” relatively casually. Each of these has contributed to a degree of ossification in understanding white in contemporary cult textiles. In all these ways, white in our 3rd-millennium textiles is now mainly absence, not presence: absence of elaboration, of dirt, of colour, and of all but the most minimal effort. Yet we are only imagining these absences. As, indeed, we are only recently become able to only imagine how textiles are created.

In the past, no household, however rich, enjoyed the bliss of that particular ignorance; though the distaff be golden, all women spun (or later sewed).¹⁰ Even if laundry was done by servants, all women remained responsible for thus evidencing competent virtue. All people (even those who might wear or use a textile just once before literally casting it lower down the social hierarchy) were aware of the need – and processes – for maintaining fabric, because that fabric lasted a lifetime not a “season”. Robes were carefully warding wealth,¹¹ and all fabric, however poor, stored not only monetary value, but human skill and time.¹² It is no accident that textile manufacture was the muse and genesis of industrialisation.¹³ So it is no surprise that this is the area of life where we are perhaps least able to identify with pre-modernity (and least able to recognise that inability).¹⁴

5 To an extent, they still are, although today automated laundry is so reliable as to transcend the need.

6 Dyed with blood/bodyfluids: e.g. Aesch. *Pers.* 315, 317; *Ag.* 1121; *Coeph.* 1011, 1013. Eur. *Hel.* 372–374; *Iph.Taur.* 258–259.

7 Techniques of cleaning/whitening included bleaching with ammoniac urine or leached wood/plant ash, sun-bleaching, sulphuring, and application of fullers’ earths, see Cleland 2003, 212 for references. Washing scenes include Hom. *Od.* 6.15–120, Eur. *Hipp.* 126; *Hel.* 181 etc.

8 It will be apparent that my work does not regard “ritual dress” as a category of any independence (or one even potentially defined by the skeletal codifications which survive). Such hypothetical independence would be precluded by the textile economy of the time. This does not mean excluding “ritual dress” as a dependent/embedded category within Greek clothing culture, but it is important to recognise the cult context as a historiographic basis for categorisation which inevitably (at least) imperfectly corresponds to ancient Greek definitions of cult/ritual/religious activities and related appropriate clothing.

9 Barber 1994.

10 See e.g. Bundrick 2008, 305–307; Barber 1994.

11 See e.g. Lyons 2003, 104–108; Cleland 2005. Dedications of purple, Karatas 2014: Attica: *IG II²* 1475; *IG II²* 1514; *IG II²* 1515; *IG II²* 1516; *IG II²* 1517; *IG II²* 1518; Cos: *HGK* 10.

12 E.g. Gortyn, Bundrick 2008, 300.

13 E.g. Griffin 2010; Barber 1994.

14 For example, a daily load in a contemporary washing machine (7 kg) represents fabric worth c. 7692 hours/1282 days (three and a third years) in hand-spinning time alone on the mechanised wheel, Griffin 2010, 19. The same load requires upwards of 50 litres of water (80 pints) or 20 standard bucket loads in input and output. This is greater than total average daily consumption in most of the world now, equal to the WHO’s recommended personal consumption (see <https://improveinternational.wordpress.com/2014/04/27/how-much-water-is-enough-determining-realistic-water-use-in-developing-countries/> and WHO Guidelines. General Comment No. 15, para 12 (a), Sub-Commission Guidelines,

The historiography of whiteness is immense and tangled. Most readers will already be familiar with *processes* of whiteness in ancient textiles, but I wish to set a somewhat different stage for these by tackling some wider assumptions. None of this will be to say that whiteness-as-absence was not a feature of ancient thought, not one part of the attitude to whiteness in 1st-millennial textiles. It is instead to say that the current dominance of the concept – backed up, of course, by the present absence of colour in ancient Greek visual evidence – is an anachronism which cannot adequately reflect 1st-millennial perspectives. None of it is to say that wearing only white garments was not one way to comply with most cultic clothing regulations: it is instead saying that this was not the only, or indeed a wholly unproblematic, way to do so.

Therefore, while we can of course find ideas of whiteness-as-absence in ancient sources on textiles, and evidence for white dress in cult, I argue that these should not (given known confirmation bias) be the aspects of textile whiteness we seek out, or attempt to elucidate. These aspects of whiteness are already salient to modern minds, outshining other aspects with more potential to shed light on specific differences of practice.

For example, it makes modern sense to distinguish – as indeed, I did – those cultic regulations requiring white garments from those proscribing certain colours.¹⁵ And yet, the very fact that both types of regulation exist must raise questions. Most fundamentally:

- a) Are regulations simple evidence that was required was being worn, what was forbidden was not? Or are they complex evidence which can exist only because expectations were not, in practice (always) met?¹⁶
- b) Does requiring white automatically proscribe all colour, and *vice versa* must proscribing colour require white?

sec. 4.) By the 1st century CE, Rome was able to sustain such volumes (at perhaps 1/12 per capita domestic availability, Bono and Boni 1996, 132) with among the most advanced water supplies of antiquity. Even so, the time and labour involved in obtaining and removing that volume was not inconsiderable. One load of clean whites, today, therefore equals unimaginable resource wealth in antiquity (and indeed, remains an exceptional luxury outside modern industrialised nations).

15 Cleland 2009a, 8–11, and see n.24 below. In general, the extant proscriptive inscriptions are earlier than the prescriptive ones requiring white/bright/clean clothing.

16 I have discussed this previously Cleland 2003; 2009a and will not repeat that here, but do believe one question needs to be borne in mind in considering the other, or any use of regulatory evidence.

This last seems a natural assumption now, but its longer chains of inference are questionable. Yes, we may choose to read from the apparent change in regulatory focus:

- a difference of dress practice (bright to white, ornamented to simple);
- a change of cult-practice (status assertion to aspiration towards equality);
- a change of legal framing, with or without such difference (from a focus on the forbidden to the permitted);
- a difference of language-logic, with or without dress-practice difference (all that not forbidden is permitted vs. all that not permitted is forbidden).

Indeed, it could be all – or more – or a combination. And yet, on reflection, reading *any* opposition depends on certain assumptions about whiteness (that it is essentially different from, or opposite to, the colours proscribed by other regulations). Are these supported by other aspects of Greek culture? In what sense does requiring white automatically proscribe “colour”? Only in the sense that “colours” are “not white”. Therefore, it is worth noting that whiteness is assumed above to be:

- a) not “colour”
- b) not “bright”
- c) simple
- d) not assertive
- e) not negative or appropriate to forbid
- f) therefore “naturally” permissible (universal, in-excludable, unexclusive)

All of these are connotations of absence. This does not in itself make them anachronistic. However, it does make them suspiciously condign to modern assumptions. Meanwhile, listing these possible connotations simply makes them easier to compare to other forms of ancient thought.

For example, on points a) and b) it is clear that white-as-colour was notably different in Greek conception. Before the ready admixture of pigments, its role in the “generation” of colours was perceived as a brightener, as much or more than as a paling/diluting agent.¹⁷ Purple, for instance, could be imagined – and prized – as red (rich) black (deep) *and* white (bright).¹⁸ We know also that *leukos* was seen as “like” pale colours we associate with white, but equally “like” colours we would radically and symbolically distinguish

17 *E.g.* Theophr. *Sens.* 77 (Democritus); Cleland 2003, 23; 26; 31–33; 40; 46–64.

18 Plat. *Tim.* 68c *etc.* Cleland 2003, 14–43. This although we know we are dealing with murex (*halourgos* – lit. sea-worked) not lilac, Cleland 2003, 26; 58.

from it (yellow).¹⁹ It is difficult then, in general, to see white as either passive, or singly located, in the Greek colour-sphere.²⁰

Equally, that colour-sphere contains variables we do not regard as colours. “Brightness”, for instance, acts much more as an independent variable in Greek conception, and also tends to appear not as a quality of hue (bright red, bright white) but as a quality to which hue is almost incidental (as, but stronger than, English might use “vivid clothing”).²¹ Contrast also seems to have been regarded for its own sake, again with scant reference to hue.²² Reconstructions of the colours of Greek statuary make this very visible: the combinations are inescapably “bright” and use contrasting colours in a way not now prized or understood.²³

In line with these factors, it is important that the proscription of a few specific hues in regulation goes hand in hand with equal reference to brightness and contrast. Although these are short texts – without explications – the potential reference of their terms is wide.²⁴ *Anthinos* (flowery) for example may call to mind bright “coloured” flowers, but that connotation rests on an exclusion of white from colour, not on the nature of flowers, many of which are bright “pure” whites rarely found in used artefacts.²⁵

Poikilos (variegated) also automatically calls to the modern mind that which is embroidered/woven in, or added with dye, as opposed to that-to-which decoration is

applied.²⁶ And yet, in a time when visual (not pigmentary) admixture was the “go-to” concept for colour-mixing, white (back)ground would be as key to brightness and contrast of pattern as any stuff of its “foreground”.²⁷ In textiles, when dyes were not routinely wash-fast, the particular contrast with white would also be an index of both quality and care, non-white grounds being more forgiving of poor-quality dyes running and fading.²⁸ On what basis, then, can we assume that proscription of rich, bright colours did conversely allow pure white? Or *vice versa*, that a requirement for white excluded other bright colours as part of the “white” garment? Why assume that any required-white garment must be all white?²⁹

Notably, the Andanian regulation, having required white, goes on to regulate, to particular width, the “coloured” (or at least, non-white) bands allowed.³⁰ A key question, in that case, is why width? The surrounding focus on monetary valuation suggests a consideration of cost, but there is no way to posit a linear relationship between width and cost of border (*i.e.* a wide border of wool spun from contrasting fleece, or other fibre cheaply altered, would obviously cost

19 Arist. *Sens.* 442a18–28. It is important to acknowledge textiles as paradigms of “whiteness” which notably yellow with age and use. Other Greek colour terms partaking of lightness/whiteness include *glaukos*, (blue/gray), *xanthos* (yellow), *oinopon* (winy), *purron* (fiery), *puroudous* (firelike), *stilbon* (gleaming), *phlogoeidous* (flamelike), *chloros* (green) and *ochros* (ochre yellow), Cleland 2003, 58; 2012b. “Translations” suggestive only.

20 Colour-spheres and categorisation, Cleland 2003, 14–64, esp. 53–56.

21 Gawlinski 2012, 117: *esthesin lamprais* (Syll.³ 1157, lines 39–41, c. 100 BCE). This may be an example of the type “white-requiring regulations”, and yet *lampros* (bright) and *leukos* (white) are not synonyms, *e.g.* Plat. *Tim.* 68c. See also n. 42 below, and Cleland 2003, 14–43; 58; Christopoulos *et al.* 2010.

22 SEG 36.267 (60 BCE, Marathon, cult of Pan and Nymphs). Robertson notes that *chromatinon* (coloured) and *bapton* (dyed) must be distinct, Robertson 2012, 224 and n. 111, and suggests meaning similar to *poikilos* for the former.

23 Brinkmann 2008, 18–39.

24 LSAM 6 (clean), 14, 35; LSCG 65; LSCGS 91 (clean, white footwear). LSCG 28, 32, 65, 68; LSCGS 33, see also LSAM 77.

25 LSAM 77 (Tlos) IG V 2.514 (Lykosura) LGS 90, IG XI 4.1300 (Delos).

26 I remain unconvinced that embroidery was not practised, regardless of whether it was a non-native technique, Lee 2015, 95 (see esp. her n. 46 for the debate). *Contra* Droß-Krüpe and Paetz gen. Schieck 2014, 207–235. *poikilos* consistently means variegated (an effect often *found* beautiful) and would, Cleland 2005, anyway tend to refer to weaving as distinct from embroidery, making analysis in this respect irrelevant. It is rather important to textile practices that certain skills may be valorised (*e.g.* weaving) others de-emphasised (*e.g.* sewing) especially in literature and metaphor, for semi-conscious reasons of cultural distinction and/or allegiance. The most obvious example is Greeks’ deliberate adherence to untailored garment-forms in general, while also – of course – tailoring some garments (*e.g.* *kandys*, outer garment with vestigial sleeves) and visibly sewing others (*e.g.* *chiton*, tunic). Contrast is not negation: doubtless the in-weaving of sporadic pattern was more valued (certainly it requires more skill and concentration) but that itself would be a statement enhanced by common contrast with painting or embroidery.

27 See n. 16, 17 above, and Arist. *Met.* 375a 20–29 (“purple is quite different on a white or a black background”, trans. Lee). In regard foregrounding in Greek colour-practices, we can hardly ignore the flexibility implied by red- and black-figure techniques in pottery.

28 Cleland 2003, 208–213, 215.

29 Terms exist for all-purple, but the equivalent is not used, except perhaps *dialeukon* (“white all through”) *Iscr.Cos ED* 180, 2nd century BCE, priesthood of Heracles. See also Spantidaki 2014, 35–45.

30 IG V¹ 1390, lines. 14–15, 17–20

less than a narrow border of fibre dyed with imported scarlet kermes insects).³¹

However, we can note, on a Harvard *hydria*, “a small but important detail ... the textile in progress on the loom has the same border as on the *chiton cheiridotos* [sleeved tunic] worn by the nurse/companion. The weaver is evidently making textiles for the *oikos* [household]. This is an important distinction.”³² Bundrick focuses on the implication the textile depicted is for use not sale (which may well also relate to men bringing resources *to* their textile-producing families – visibly not receiving resources *from* them – and further explain purse-bearers). However, there are also significant implied informational/communicative potentials, particularly in the context of presenting a harmonious, self-sufficient household to the community.

That we find no explicit system of livery in the ancient world comparable to that of the European Middle Ages (or of Chinese or Japanese cultures) is more suggestive of unusual systematisation in those cultures than lack of informative readings for 1st-millennial textiles.³³ It is naive to suppose that woven patterns (and their digital instructions) were innovated anew in each generation. Therefore, they were transmitted (often in families) acquiring – as all such information does, whether in the making of food, music or cloth – particular recognisable refinements, variants and felicitous mistakes.

This is referenced rather clearly in the frequent “recognition through textiles” scenes (often of considerable poignancy, but also detail) in Greek literature.³⁴ It is implied, also, by the display of dedicated textiles, not only in itself, but alongside the particular inscribed information offered their viewers, and the rotation of the collections.³⁵ A historiography that continues to classify other art-forms by “artist” should not object to the idea that viewers could recognise pattern-families – and even the individual “fist”

of a weaver – in 1st-millennial textiles, and read them in meaningful ways.

Therefore, I am not convinced the role of borders is yet fully-understood for Greek textiles, much less in clothing.³⁶ The implications of this are not purely economic or “status” considerations, and they do not depend upon the existence of a literature comparable to that surrounding the *clavus* stripe in Roman dress.³⁷ Pattern-woven textiles are particularly apt to offer viewers complex information, but as we understand from modern pointillism, viewing-distance is an issue. In this, regulating width makes sense, because there is a linear relationship between width of border and legible complexity of pattern.

Considering this is already a routine feature of analysing Greek art. For pottery, we understand that the complexity of borders varies with period, and with size/type. The Chiusi *skyphos* wine-cup offers a glimpse of relationship with textile borders: the François *krater* mixing-bowl a glimpse of the recursive artistic potential of registers.³⁸ We understand also, through the evidence of mosaic, the highly-evolved subtlety with which Greek culture manipulated optical mixing at various ranges. A handspan-border offers a “canvas” for more and different expression than a half-finger-border, and also costs more in time.

I have argued before, as again here, that the aim of regulating dress in cult was not to “strip-out” expressive potential, but to contain it.³⁹ Not least in the sense noted by Bundrick: “There was a fine line to tread ... in the representation of wealth and leisure, and textiles may have formed part of this ... An overly ostentatious display of wealth might recall the aristocratic *habrosyne* [luxury] ... [these] *himatia* [cloaks] are not elaborately decorated or trimmed, in contrast to the fancier Ionian-style clothes worn by the aristocracy in Archaic and Early Classical scenes of the *symposium* [drinking party] and *komos* [ritual carouse] ... Is this part of an overall message of restraint and *sophrosyne*

31 Cf. n. 19 above, suggesting *chroma* (coloration) not achieved by dyeing (though “dyed” may be used there as dyed-only, *i.e.* without pattern). See also Cleland 2003, 224–229.

32 Family group; Group of Polygnotos. Harvard University, Arthur M. Sackler Museum, inv. no. 1960.342. Bundrick 2008, 317, 319.

33 An example close to home, for me, is tartan. While the elaborate systematisation of family-by-pattern is undoubtedly a modern imposition, there is no reason to doubt its origin in actually-expert readings of geographic and sub-cultural cues in the dye-colours and style of pattern-weaving of the *féileadh-mór* (long plaid) – a garment of notable similarity to ancient draped-forms and wearing/gestural practices, see also Harlow 2014, 15–23.

34 Cleland 2012a; in tragedy, Aesch. *Choeph.* 231–232; Eur. *Iph. Taur.* 814–817; *Ion* 26, 196–197, 506, 1417–1424.

35 Cleland 2005.

36 See *e.g.* Cleland 2005, 2009b, 2012. Regarding appliqued borders, I make the same point, *cf.* Lee, 2015, 95, as for embroidery: in-woven bands would be constrained by dye fastness, and therefore technically superior and more valued/valuable. Temporary bands – we do see such *taina* prominently displayed in art – could be more flexibly produced, used, exchanged and renewed, and were also possible in more locations on fabric/garments. See Cleland 2009b.

37 Cleland *et al.* 2007, 35. As with regulations, explicit symbolism attested in literature is useful (though never unambiguous) evidence, but hardly a *sine qua non* for the existence of dress practices.

38 Penelope Painter: Museo Archeologico, Chiusi, inv. no. 1831; Kleitias: Museo Archeologico Nazionale, Florence, inv. no. 4209.

39 Cleland 2003; Cleland 2009a.

[moderation] of rejection of *habrosyne* among both men and women? The vase painters apparently attempted to tread the line between austerity ... and ostentation ... by using textiles to reinforce the distinction”.⁴⁰ Reconsidering images, we should also ask: which was “uncoloured” – a dark, one-hue cloak, or a white, patterned *chiton*?

In short, considering white “versus” colour, particularly in pattern, what at first sight appears a key opposition certainly becomes less simple. The very existence of the supposed opposition clearly depends, at least in part, on the availability to the modern mind of a concept of “pure white Greek” dress which may only very exceptionally have existed at the time.

Assumption of pure “simplicity” regarding white is difficult, also, because white was not simple in practice. Before plentiful piped water, synthetic detergents and bleaches, and routinely colourfast dyes, white in textiles was the exception, not the norm.⁴¹ Creating whiteness – not paleness – in natural fibres requires deliberate and extensive processes at least equal to dyeing, and generally requiring more frequent repetition.⁴²

When, as in Greek thought, divine purity exists in opposition to the dirty fragility of clay-created humanity, expressed in sex, blood, sweat, food and so on, then we can argue that any purity function of white in ritual⁴³ was not to be colourless, or blank, but to be most visibly *spotless*.⁴⁴ An

aim of regulation could be to require participants to assert this, in all its lack of ease, alongside (not instead of) the other assertions and reflections of their *kosmos* (personal adornment).

There are, of course, well-known 1st-millennium analogies between simplicity and undyed textiles,⁴⁵ but there is more than one kind of simplicity (or assertion) just as there is more than one kind of “bright”. Greek culture is relatively full of assertive simplicities with clear socio-economic implications. The simplicity of male dress, for example, was frequently contrasted with feminine elaboration, while requiring – of course – considerable attention to exercise, grooming, leisure and behaviour to carry off to advantage.⁴⁶ Aspirational simplicity of private life (e.g. housing, work) represented conscious sacrifice for housing, and conspicuous privilege regarding work, and so on.⁴⁷

One might venture to suggest that the ideal Greek simplicity was like the swan: serene on the surface, assertively energetic beneath. The mechanics of white suit this, especially as combined with decoration asserting both

40 Bundrick 2008, 320.

41 See above, n. 6, 13 and Cleland *et al.* 2007, 35, 75, 149 *etc.*

42 Nor necessarily subtractive, since fulling can be as much a process of addition (of earth, no less) as dyeing, see recently Brevis 2014. As Brinkmann emphasises of sculptural representations: “all the visible parts of a figure would have been coloured ... Garments made of very light fabric tended to be painted a delicate yellow or brown” (Brinkmann 2008, 28). That is, pale garments were not depicted by absence (of pigment, on the “clarity” of marble) but by added colour.

43 I do not intend to assume a position on “purity”, ritual in/or cult, or indeed “function”, see e.g. Bremmer 1998, only that there is a default nexus of association (e.g. the white wedding gown, soiled, at the ceremony) in modern assumption which must be anachronistic, and therefore should be discounted.

44 *Poikilos* meaning spotted, Hom. *Il.*10.30; Hes. *Th.*300; Pi. *P.*8.46; 4.214; E. *Ba.*249; Plot. 4.4.29; *PCair.Preis.*37.9 (iii BCE); Alex.110.14, cf. Ath.9.977c; Arist. *HA.*543a25; (still in scientific use). See also Cleland *et al.* 2007, 150, various entries. Clean: Selinus: *SEG* 43.630; Kios: *IKios* 19; Lindos: *Lindos II* 487. Also e.g. Hom. *Od.*23.189–194 and Dio.Sic. *Lib.*10.9.6 “Pythagoras taught that when men approach the gods ... garments ... should be not costly, but only white [*lampras*] and clean [*katharas*], and that likewise ... a body clean [*soma katharos*] ... a soul that is undefiled” (trans. Oldfather 1989). It is, in purely surface terms, simply easier to remove dirt of all kinds from the (smooth) skin than from (textured) fabric. Nowadays we put on clean clothes after

bathing so as not to dirty the cleaned body. In the past, the same association was almost certainly of reversed motivation: people bathed before putting on clean clothes, so as not to dirty the fabric. In both cases, freshly laundered clothes are a visual, surface/social, indicator of personal hygiene, but the difference is non-trivial, particularly for cult practice which explicitly required separation in time and preparation from the polluting pursuits of mortality. It is also worth noting, in respect of textile practices, that Greek culture embraced and allowed non-water washing of the body. (Itself a good indication of non-reliable/plentiful water supplies.) Again, the difference between skin and textiles signifies, as dirt can effectively be lifted from the (naturally oily) skin using oil and scraped away, whereas scraping dirt on textiles tends to embed it. There is a certain amount of evidence that oil was also used to beautify (and perhaps analogously to body-washing, protect) textiles, but again, whiteness would likely be a special case in that.

45 E.g. Pl. *Rep.* 429D 25–29 *etc.* Generally, Vetter 2005.

46 “Despite the fine trappings, therefore, the aesthetic of the *oikoi* [household] represented on vases is fairly restrained. Take, for example, the men who appear in the textile production scenes and in other domestic images. As is typical on 5th-century vases, they wear the *himation* [cloak] with no *chiton* [tunic] beneath, a garment which by its complex drapery and restriction of arm movement suggests leisure and time spent in political activities rather than hard work ... Presumably, the juxtaposition of these *himation*-clad men with spinning or weaving women suggests that the wives made the fabric for the garments with homespun wool. Is this part of an overall message of restraint ... among both men and women?” Bundrick 2008, 320. It seems quite significant that complex male dress would assert *female* skill as well as male status.

47 Dem. *Olynthiac* 3.25, Ault 2005, 141; Nevett 1999, 83–91; Goldberg 1999; Tsakirgis 2005.

visible restraint (as in housing, the wealth to elaborate, the wit to restrain) and privileged access to fast dyes (a little of the best). Further, even today wearing white *implies* possession of numerous other garments for daily use, although it directly showcases only one outfit of “elegant simplicity”.

Focusing, as we tend to, on Athens, it is tempting also to read a democratic – or elsewhere demotic/inclusive – potential in white for ritual.⁴⁸ Yet all-white dress was (and remains) difficult. The all-white “dress” outfit, particularly if composed of multiple garments, must still be “extra” to the clothes one works, sleeps, eats in. In considering how required-white might have applied in practice, it is important to recall that (as throughout the medieval/early modern period in Europe) technicalities of dyeing and washing encouraged standard 1st millennial dress-practices of inner garments of undyed or white linen, outer garments of dark or dyed wool (see also n. 35). In both inner- and outer-garments, the indexes of wealth and leisure-time go *to* (not *from*): to white so not based on it, as *to* dyed from naturally dark fibre.

All persons would have had off-white inner garments, yet wealth and status could be denoted by gradations of whiteness. These could also be shown by number of layers, perhaps especially when outer, protective, layers were also white. Layers were limited at Andania, where it is notable that most prescribed garments were inner-type.⁴⁹ What we see here is required-white *and* “white-plus”: all are required to wear white, but some may wear multiple whites, of variable quality/value, and with variable decoration. To imagine whiteness as *one* thing – or as a universal quality – is to flatten the potential to recognise subtle practices from brief mentions. Again, both simplicity and assertion can be united in whiteness-of-garments.

We tend to focus on elaboration as the signifier of wealth and status, as no doubt it was. But as we have seen, white itself can be bright (decorative and decorated) assertive colour; not at all simple to achieve or wear. In this, we may approach the final concepts listed above (non-assertion and non-negativity) with a bit more nuance. If white was assertively-simple, technically-remarkable, gradatedly-equal, then it was not unambiguous. It might be both forbidden as bright *and* required as simple, even at the same time. If the dividing line between virtuous-bright (attention deserved) and scandalous-bright (attention sought) tends

now to be the “purity” of white, this is equally clearly a legacy of particular ideas and practices, not an innate association of colours that must apply equally to the past.

With regards non-negative associations, there is also some supporting evidence for funeral use of white textiles (impure by association with death, and therefore possible to forbid, or requiring active prescription to combat that association).⁵⁰ Interestingly, funerary use of white itself also can appear to be a form of assertive simplicity; capable of highlighting the absence of fragile human behaviours of mourning (ashes, bloody lacerations) or highlighting their presence by the conspicuous consumption of a valued quality (clean whiteness). Funerary practice is also useful in reminding us of the inherent tension represented by cultic regulation: how fashionable would an outfit have to be for you to forsake black, and present at a funeral in bright, “cheerful” colours? When we use regulations as evidence, it is important to remember that we are looking at something similar: behaviours inevitably contrary to community norms of some kind.

Considering Greek funerary practice leads inevitably to sumptuary concepts. All regulation of dress must somehow impact status presentation, and thus all regulation of dress is to an extent sumptuary (and characteristically ineffective but assertive). However, classification as “sumptuary” can invoke systems of status and control that are not universal. For the reasons above, there is actually little reason to suppose that proscriptive regulations were more sumptuary: in dress, to forbid one thing must always require another. Miller puts the basis of this well: “The capacity of the individual to maintain several identities concurrently is well established, as is the ability of dress to reflect (passively) or to announce (actively) the social identities of its bearer.”⁵¹ Cross-culturally, sumptuary measures may also require: proscription may be better seen to assert control of “announcing”, prescription asserting control of what can acceptably be “reflected”.⁵²

A more relevant aspect of sumptuary law is the use of such “controls” to assert rights over individual behaviour, rather than to exclude garments-in-practice. (Assertion in other contexts having been morally explicated or justified does not imply it must be so, *e.g.* linking white with purity,

48 Cleland 2003, 250–276, esp. 271.

49 IG V¹ 1390, lines 17–18, 20, 21. Miller 2013, 18; Gawlinkski 2012, 114. Five separate garment types are specified as inner garments (*chiton*, *kalasiris*, *sindonites*, *hupoduma*, *hupodutes*) the rarer terms relate to linen/cotton, Hdt. 2.81.1; 2.95.3, and to inner wear (apart from tunic, no standard translations available). In contrast, the *himation* (cloak, qualified by fibre and gender) is the sole specified outer garment.

50 Contrary to literary tropes, *cf.* n. 35 above. LSAM 16 (3rd century BCE, Gambreion, Mysia, Asia Minor): women in mourning to wear clean grey clothes (*phaian estheta me katerrupomenen*) men and children the same or white. See also Price 2004, 180; Lupu 2009, 76. Keos LSCG 97 (burial in white cloth) and of course, Athens *e.g.* Dem. 43.62, Plut. *Solon* 21; Cic. *DeLeg.* 2.64; Stears 1998, 117; Stears 1995.

51 Miller, 2013, 18.

52 Cleland 2009a; generally, Hunt 1996.

decoration with vice.)⁵³ It is undeniable that these clothing regulations – by existing – asserted the right of each cult to modify the dress (social and personal behaviour) of worshippers. However, there seems little reason to suppose this evidence of the capacity of *all* authorities to do so, over all persons at all times.⁵⁴

Indeed, why link such regulations specifically to dress as (theoretically) separate from behaviour, which Greek cults routinely regulated? These regulations are evidence that dress was problematised in certain cults, whether for general or specific reasons: and so, if such were needed, they are evidence that Greek dress was meaningful in ways relevant to the divine. However, as the wider target of regulation is behaviour modification, they may also indicate something significant about Greek conceptions of dress. Perhaps to assume dress-as-thing, not dress-as-act/process, is an inherently modern-materialist perspective?

As with undress and sex, dress-as-personal-choice may be universal, yet the conditions governing that choice radically different in practice and conception. We are used to being able to acquire dress (imagined or coveted) with negligible time and expenditure. When textiles are not

ephemeral objects, however, the processes of selection – and manner of wearing – must be as or more significant than (restricted) object-choice. Modernity offers easy options in multiple possible acts of dressing in different garments, whereas in the 1st millennium, dress must have been more revealing of radically wider behaviours (family wealth and structure, personal security of income, access to trade, availability of bodyservants, social class, birth order for children, recentness of washing, type of work, *etc.*) than personal garment-preference alone. Such behaviours affected dress, but were not “purely” dress-behaviours.

Perhaps the more appropriate self-presentation comparison in modernity is instead the car: an object one inhabits, but does not exchange, situation to situation. Of course, one may alter its characteristics, and therefore, viewers will assess these factors alongside the nature of the object. (Is it neat? Clean or dirty (or polished)? Well-maintained or lacking care? How new? How many previous owners? Were they careful? And so on.) The alterable characteristics of such a durable object speak to mood, attitude, time and access; these are not encompassed by “make and model” or list price. An old or cheap car, lovingly maintained and carefully used, makes a positive statement. A luxury car neglected and abused makes a negative one, though the former (may) denote economic constraints, the latter wealth (or profligacy). Context matters: “what things are” is not necessarily an accurate guide to what they can mean, or how they can be used to mean it.

Relatedly, there is some evidence that scholarship is encouraged to underestimate both the colour and the complexity of Greek dress by an aspirational focus on constructing a contrast between Hellenic unity/simplicity with Persian complexity/ostentation, in literature and thought at Athens’ peak text production.⁵⁵ If so, it is not impossible that later focus of regulation on requiring white reveals a tension between this construct – surely of increasing importance as culturally definitive/distinctive in the Hellenistic and Graeco-Roman periods – and actual (multi-ethnic, multi-identity, interculturally-located) dress practices of daily life.

It is often, cross-culturally, felt desirable for ritual to hark back to earlier eras (an argument made for the *peplos*⁵⁶ tunic) and in doing so, over-formalise and dictate what was once routine. Such over-formalisation is naturally more visible than daily practice in the historical record. Given the inherent complexity of “Greek” dress (a fuzzy-signifier of nebulous Greekness within, between and around multifarious Greek city-states) perhaps this tends to retrospectively outshine less formal, more contradictory and multivalent ideas and expressions?

53 Naked simplicity (literal and figurative transparency) was associated with prostitution, Gawlinski 2012, 118; Dalby 2002, 115–121, wifely virtue/appeal being *by contrast* located in their hard-worked, self-“written” coverings. Significantly for this, if we take *kouroi/korai* statues to be nubile ideals, Brinkmann makes clear that there was no sex-distinction in the degree of their *kosmesis*, only in its non-textile/textile nature, Brinkmann 2008; Karakasi 2003. While nakedness may always in some sense be sexual in clothed cultures, this does not necessarily imply inherent sexiness as opposed to *availability*: cf. “the Phiale Painter’s *skyphos* provided ... the pleasurable domestic fantasy of a sexy, skilled wife and a well-appointed house” Bundrick 2008, 321. The point is that once we discard modern assumptions about domesticity, there is little to distinguish this image from the “sports car plus hot model” paradigm: enviable economic success and status, confirmed and expressed by a particular type of (and hence arousing) feminine companion. Such similarity is inevitably suggested by *kosmesis* tropes in literature, and by literary and visual focus on the lavish adornment of the bride, *e.g.* Oakley and Sinos 1993.

54 Or even all cult participants, Cleland 2003, 250–274. For contrary views, see Mills 1984; Culham 1986. Notably, some sacred laws required golden wreaths and purple garments for priests during festivals, sacrifices and contests: *Cos Iscr. di Cos ED* 89; *Ischr. di Cos ED* 180; *Ischr. di Cos ED* 215; Dionysus at Skepsis *SEG* 36.1334 and Priene, *IPriene* 174. Attempts to prevent impersonation or usurpation (actual or symbolic) of official status are not usually considered sumptuary at all, and this might certainly have been a wider concern of regulations addressing status display in cult (perhaps particularly in cults or communities where the priest/priestess did not come from among the wealthiest).

55 *E.g.* Miller 1997; 2013, 26.

56 Lee 2005, 55–64.

We can imagine, then, a situation where normal practice *remained the same*: to wear unbound inner garments (usually white) for cult practice.⁵⁷ And yet in earlier eras, some contexts may have required (proscriptive) restraint of tendencies to show-off with bright over-garments: not necessarily less white, but more obviously indicative of status. Meanwhile, in later times, some contexts of more diverse ethnic dress⁵⁸ may have required (prescriptive) enforcement of a culturally-unifying ideal of simplicity: necessarily more white, but no less indicative of status. We can imagine that certain types of white garments were always available to 1st-millennium individuals who chose to slice the Gordian Knot of dress-problematics for cult practice. But we cannot, I argue, imagine that those problematics therefore did not exist, or are insignificant for our understandings of textiles, cults, or textiles in cults.

Overall, the importance of regulations for whiteness (among other colours) is not that they “should” or do define *any* answer about white textiles and/or cult practice, but that they pose questions which clearly require answering. None of the questions above require one to conclude that “normal” cult clothing in 1st-millennium Greece was not white (or whitish). They simply intend to highlight that these regulations, and what we know of cult practice, and dress-practice, and legal and status practices, do not define what 1st-millennium whiteness was (or even that it existed as a singular thing). They indicate that in cult, dress, law and status – and in technique and manufacture – whiteness was problematised and active. Investigating an active presence, not a symbolic absence, demands distinct approaches.

There can be a tendency in historical analysis of cultural behaviours, to seek a “correct” answer on practices which may instead have been inherently and meaningfully contradictory in use. The study of dress (in particular, as a complex and ever-evolving phenomenon with social and individual imports interacting in everyday and exceptional use) should guard against this desire more than most. Often, to say “symbolic” is the historian’s “ritual structure” – almost certainly true, but equally certainly a truism. The issue which demands further investigation is not so much if or what colours (however conceived) symbolised in 1st millennial textiles, but how. That “how” must embrace – and reciprocally inform – our understanding of technical and practical constraints, social aspirations, differing contexts, and the variable success of art and regulation in policing cultural norms.

Whiteness is without doubt the “ground” of modern conceptions of Greek textiles: it is literally the blank canvas of our early personal understandings, later overwritten with

more sophisticated information. But if we are to better understand 1st millennial textiles themselves, we cannot unconsciously project this back as a conception of what textile whiteness once was.

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57 Gawlinski 2008, 159–160; Lee 2015, 215–222; also Bundrick 2008, 325.

58 See e.g. Miller 2013 and its references.

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Weaving the Chalkeia: Reconstruction and ritual of an Athenian festival

Jacquelyn H. Clements¹

One of several Athenian festivals in honour of the goddess Athena, the Chalkeia is often overshadowed by the more substantiated Panathenaia, a festival that is better known from both the archaeological and literary record. Collectively, however, the evidence for the Chalkeia, gathered from literary, visual, and epigraphical sources, indicates that it had a more prominent position within the Athenian festival calendar than is generally recognised. The Chalkeia also served as a perceptible link to the greatest festival of the Athenians, the Panathenaia, because it was during the Chalkeia that the *peplos* of Athena was woven in preparation for presentation to Athens' patron goddess.

Our knowledge of the Chalkeia derives from a number of sources, many of which are common to the understanding of other Athenian festivals, such as vase painting, inscriptions concerning the festival, and the attestation of later lexicographers. Although concrete information for the Chalkeia can best be characterised as scant and rather limited in scope, there is a general agreement among scholars that it was a festival closely connected to craftsmen, and in particular, bronze workers. This assumption is based on the Greek word for copper and bronze, *χαλκός* (and related to the word *χαλκεύς*, “smith”), to which the word “Chalkeia” is etymologically linked, and to which H.W. Parke suggested implied an origin that possibly stretched

back into the Bronze Age.² The festival is variously attributed either to Athena, Hephaistos, or the two together, both of them deities of crafts who figure prominently in early Athenian myth. The festival took place on the last day of Pyanepsion, that is, October/November.³ Ever since the work of Ludwig Deubner, scholars have assumed that the Chalkeia was associated with a particular aspect of Athena, referred to in the epithet “Ergane”, which emphasises her role as a goddess of crafts and craftsmen.⁴

Late Antique and Byzantine lexicographers are among our most complete sources of information regarding the Chalkeia festival. Their understanding of the Chalkeia is quite wide-ranging but often inconsistent, as well as chronologically distant from Classical Athens. One of the earliest of these lexicographers, Harpocration, defined the Chalkeia as follows:

Χαλκεῖα· Ὑπερείδης ἐν τῷ κατὰ Δημέου ξενίας (fr. 90 Jessen). τὰ Χαλκεῖα ἑορτὴ παρ' Ἀθηναίους <τῇ Ἀθηνᾷ addidit Meursius> ἀγομένη Πυανεψιδῶνος ἔνη καὶ νέα, χειρώναξιν κοινῇ, μάλιστα δὲ χαλκεῦσιν, ὥς φησιν Ἀπολλώνιος ὁ Ἀχαρνεύς (FGrH 356 F 18).

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2 Parke 1977, 92. For the etymology, see also Simon 1983, 38. Hesychius describes the festival as commemorating the invention of skills (Hesychius, s.v. Χαλκεῖα).

3 Simon 1983, 38. For a sense of how the Chalkeia fits into the Athenian festival calendar, see Parker's (2005, tab. 3, 486–487) helpful chart. Mikalson 1975, 78 also discusses the Chalkeia in relationship to the Athenian calendar year.

4 Deubner 1956, 35–36.

Φανόδημος δὲ οὐκ Ἀθηνᾶ φησιν ἄγεσθαι τὴν ἑορτὴν ἀλλ' Ἡφαίστῳ (*FGrH* 365 F 3). γέγραπται δὲ καὶ Μενάνδρῳ δράμα Χαλκεΐα.
(Harpocration, χ 2)

Chalkeia: According to which Hyperides, friend of Demeas (fr. 90 Jessen). The Chalkeia, a festival for the Athenians (of Athens, Meursius added), celebrated on the last day of Pyanepsion. Common to handicraftsmen, and especially those working in bronze, as is said by Apollonios of Acharnai (*FGrH* 356 F 18).

But Phanodemus said that it was not celebrated for Athena but for Hephaistos (*FGrH* 365 F 3). And there is also a play written by Menander called *Chalkeia*.⁵

Harpocration clearly has drawn upon other, older sources for his definition, including both the 2nd-century BCE writer on festivals, Apollonios of Acharnai (4), and the 4th-century BCE historian Phanodemus (5), to highlight earlier misunderstandings of the deity who was celebrated in the festival. Another interesting point that he adds at the end of his discussion is that there was a dramatic play by Menander entitled “Chalkeia.”⁶ As the sole reference to this play by the 4th-century BCE New Comic poet, we are left only to surmise its theme, although presumably its narrative would have focused on the festival’s events, or perhaps it was performed during the festival.

The Suda also provides us with two more descriptions of the Chalkeia:

Χαλκεΐα· ἑορτὴ Ἀθηνῆσιν, ἃ τινες Ἀθήναια καλοῦσιν, οἱ δὲ Πάνδημον διὰ τὸ ὑπὸ πάντων ἄγεσθαι.
(Suda, χ 34)

Χαλκεΐα· ἑορτὴ ἀρχαία καὶ δημώδης (δημοτελὴς Eust.) πάλαι, ὕστερον δὲ ὑπὸ μόνων ἤγετο τῶν τεχνιτῶν, ὅτι ὁ Ἡφαίστος ἐν τῇ Ἀττικῇ χαλκὸν εἰργάσατο. ἔστι δὲ ἔνη καὶ νέα τοῦ Πυανεινῶνος· ἐν ἧ καὶ ἱερεῖαι μετὰ τῶν ἀρρηφόρων τὸν πέπλον διάζονται.
(Suda, χ 35, *Etym. Magn.* 805.43–47)

Chalkeia: a festival of the Athenians, which some call the “Athenaea,” and which is called “Pandemos” to others and is celebrated by all.
(Suda, χ 34)

Chalkeia: an ancient and popular (“at public cost” Eust.) festival of long ago, but later was celebrated

by craftsmen alone, because Hephaistos worked in bronze in Attica. It is on the last day of the month of Pyanopsion, in course of which the priestesses, along with the arrhephoroi, begin to weave the *peplos*.
(Suda, χ 35, *Etym. Magn.* 805.43–47)

Both Deubner and Robert Parker found fault with the name “Pandemos” in the first definition.⁷ The Suda also does not attribute the festival to a particular deity, but the entry does assert that it is an Athenian festival. The second definition from the Suda is more intriguing, but complicates our knowledge of the Chalkeia even more. The use of δημώδης/δημοτελὴς implies that the festival’s earliest celebrants were all citizens, but that at some point it became a festival for craftsmen alone, due to their connection with Hephaistos.⁸ When this possible shift in types of celebrants occurred is impossible to say, and raises compelling questions regarding the relationship between the Chalkeia’s honoured deity (or deities) and those who participated in the festival.

Another lexicographer of the 2nd century CE, Pollux, gives a far more abbreviated definition of the Chalkeia, but one that echoes the sentiments of Phanodemus, as quoted by Harpocration above:⁹

Χαλκεΐα ἑορτὴ ἐν τῇ Ἀττικῇ Ἡφαίστου ἱερά.
(Pollux, 7.105)

Chalkeia: a holy festival of Hephaistos in Attica.

Because the two lexicographers associate the Chalkeia with the god Hephaistos, as does the second definition in the Suda, some scholars have connected the Chalkeia to Hephaistos, no doubt because of the bronze connotations of the festival’s name and Hephaistos’ link to bronze-work.¹⁰ Robertson, for example, used Pollux and Phanodemus’ assertion that the Chalkeia was a festival of Hephaistos as well as of Athena in order to situate the rituals of the festival, including a probable torch race, between the Kerameikos and the Kolonos Agoraios, the site of the

7 Parker 2005, 463: “But the *Athenaea* [an alternative name for *Chalkeia*] of the Hellenistic inscriptions were on an elaborate scale hard to reconcile with the ‘craftsmen’s festival’ as which some sources describe the *Chalkeia* (Suda, χ 35).”

8 Parker (2005, 162) stated “the Suda’s claim that the Chalkeia had once been more than this is surely correct; it was at this festival, for instance, that the weaving of the Panathenaic *peplos* was inaugurated.”

9 For these short lexical entries, see also Hesychius in n. 3 above, who associates the Chalkeia with craftsmen.

10 See, for example, Pollard 1965, 48, who stated, “Hephaistos was naturally concerned in the ritual, but Athena had the chief part.” For more on Hephaistos’ role in Greek cult, see Larson 2007, 159–160.

5 Translations are my own, unless otherwise stated.

6 Also quoted in *Deipnosophistae*, Ath. 11.108.12: “Μενάνδρος δ’ ἐν τῷ ἐπιγραφομένῳ δράματι Χαλκεΐα φησιν (fr. 510 K).”

Temple of Hephaistos.¹¹ Hephaistos' role in the Chalkeia is not entirely clear, but his role as a god of craftsmanship, a male counterpart to Athena, is deserving of further exploration.

In addition, Parker suggested that the aitiological origin of the Chalkeia was based in Hephaistos' fathering of Erichthonios, the eponymous and autochthonous ancestor of the Athenian race.¹² Indeed, the close relationship of Athena and Hephaistos is reflected in imagery in Athenian vase painting of the birth of Erichthonios.¹³ In such scenes, the two deities are depicted together with the baby Erichthonios, both as a family unit but also in harmony as the progenitors and protectors of Athens.¹⁴ Nonetheless, the only concrete evidence that we have linking the Chalkeia with Hephaistos is the commentary from the late sources; the visual representations of Athena and Hephaistos together are discussed further below.

The epigraphical evidence for the festival

The Chalkeia is also attested in several preserved inscriptions.¹⁵ Two of these, Agora I 2448 and IG II² 674, clearly refer to the Chalkeia, while a third, SEG XXI.478, may refer to the festival in a reconstructed passage of the text. Agora I 2448 was excavated in 1935 about 15 metres southwest of the Tholos in the Athenian Agora.¹⁶ This prytany decree dates to c. 290–275 BCE and has been reconstructed as follows:

Agora I 2448:

lacuna

[----- Μαιμακτηρί]

- 11 The location of the Hephaisteion was in a "dominant position" on the hill of Kolonos Agoraios, overlooking the Agora, and indicated Hephaistos' importance as a god of craftsmen, according to Parke 1977, 92. Parker 2005, 464 suggested that the festival was centered on the Hephaisteion, although cites no evidence to support this. See also Robertson 1992, 94.
- 12 Parker 2005, 380. Implicitly he alludes to Erichthonios' birth with this suggestion: Hephaistos, overcome with desire for Athena, pursued the goddess, but she fled, and Hephaistos spilled his seed upon the ground, resulting in the autochthonic birth of Erichthonios – and subsequently, the Athenian race. See Apollodoros *Bibl.* 3.14.6, as well as Deacy 2008, 53–54.
- 13 See the discussion in Shapiro 1998. Particularly relevant is the name vase of the Painter of Munich 2413, dated to c. 470–455 BCE (BAPD 205571).
- 14 Shapiro 2008, 165. For the idea of Athena and Hephaistos as forming a family group with Erichthonios, see Shapiro 1998, 135.
- 15 Beyond the three inscriptions discussed here, Parker 2005, 464 mentions several other possibilities.
- 16 Dow 1937, 38; Meritt and Trail 1974, 81.

[ὄνος δεκάτει ὑστέρ]αι, μ[ιᾷ καὶ εἰκοστῇ τῆς πρυτανείας]
[ἐκκλησία κυρία· τ]ῶν προ[έδρων ἐπενηφιζεν --- ca. 12 ---]
[--- ca. 12 ---]ιος καὶ σ[υμπρόεδροι ἔδοξεν τῷ δήμῳ]
[--- ca. 10 ---]νος Εἴτεα[ῖος εἶπεν· περὶ ὧν ἀπαγγέλλουσιν]

- 5 [οἱ πρυτάνει]ς τῆς Ἀκαμα[ντίδος ὑπὲρ τῶν ἱερῶν ὧν ἔθυσον τὰ τε]
[πρὸ τῶν ἐκκλη]σιῶν τοῖς θεοῖς οἷς πάτριον ἦν· ἔθυσαν δὲ καὶ]
[τὰ Στήνια καὶ τὰ] Χαλκεῖα κα[τὰ τὰ πάτρια ὑπὲρ τε τῆς βουλῆς]
[καὶ τοῦ δήμου· τύχει ἀγαθεῖ δ]εδόχθαι τῷ δήμῳ τὰ μὲν ἀγαθὰ]
[δέχεσθαι ἅ φασιν γεγενέναι ἐν τοῖς ἱεροῖς οἷς ἔθυσον ἐπὶ ὑ]
10 [γίειαι καὶ σωτηρί]αι τῆς β[ουλῆς καὶ τοῦ δήμου, -----]

lacuna

In this fragmentary inscription, the Chalkeia is mentioned clearly in line 7. If Dow's reconstruction is correct, the text refers to the performance of sacrifices at the Stenia, a festival for women that celebrated Demeter, and the Chalkeia, according to ancestral custom on behalf of the *boule* and the people.¹⁷ Thus we see that the Chalkeia was celebrated in the 3rd century BCE, with appropriate sacrifices, and that this marked the festival calendar, possibly along with the Stenia.¹⁸

The second inscription, IG II² 674, was discovered in the Athenian Agora in 1907 during the excavations of the Archaeological Society, and dates to 275/4 BCE.¹⁹ A rather lengthy inscription on Hymettian marble, it honours the *prytaneis* of Antiochis in the archonship of Glaukippos:

IG II² 674:

- fr. a.1 [ἐ]πὶ Γλαυκίππου ἄρχοντος ἐπὶ τῆς Ἀντιοχίδος
τετάρτης πρυτανείας, ἥι Εὐθ[οίνος - -]-
ρίτου Μυρρινούσιος ἐγραμμάτευεν· Πυανοσιῶνος
δευτέραι μετ' εἰκά[δας· ἐκκλησία·]
τῶν προέδρων ἐπενηφιζεν· Ἡ[γ]ησίλοχος Κηφισοδότου
Πειραιεύς καὶ συμ[πρόεδροι]-
ἔδοξεν τῷ δήμῳ· Εὐθύμαχος Εὐ[θ]ίππου υπεταίων
εἶπεν· περὶ ὧν ἀπαγγέλλου]-
5 σιν οἱ πρυτάνεις τῆς Ἀντιοχίδος ὑπὲρ τῶν ἱερῶν ὧν
ἔθυσον τὰ τε πρὸ [τῶν ἐκκλη]-
σιῶν τῷ Ἀπόλλωνι τῷ Προστατηρίῳ καὶ τοῖς ἄλλοις
θεοῖς, οἷς πάτ[ριον ἦν, ἔθ]-
υσαν δὲ καὶ τὰ Στήνια παρ' α[ὐ]τῶν τεῖ Δημητρί καὶ
τεῖ Κόρει ὑπὲρ τ[ῆς βουλῆς]-
ς καὶ τοῦ δήμου, τύχει ἀγαθεῖ δεδόχθαι τῷ δήμῳ·
~~~~~ τὰ μὲν [ἀγαθὰ δέ]-  
ιχεσθαι ἅ φασιν γεγενέναι ἐν τοῖς ἱεροῖς, οἷς ἔθυσον  
ἐπὶ ὑγίειαι καὶ σω[τηρίαι τῇ]-

17 For more on the Stenia, see Simon 1983, 19f. and Parker 2005, 272 and 480.

18 See Mikalson 1998, 115 for discussion of the Chalkeia and Stenia in the 3rd century BCE.

19 Meritt and Trail 1974, 89. See also Oikonomos 1910, 18–27.



10 ζ βουλῆς καὶ τοῦ δήμου τοῦ Ἀθηναίων καὶ τῶν ἄλλων  
 ἀπάντων, ὅσοι [εἴσιν εὖν]-  
 οὖς τῷ δήμῳ. ἐπειδὴ δὲ οἱ πρυτάνεις τάς τε θυσίας  
 τὰς καθηκούσας [ἔθυσαν]-  
 ν καλῶς καὶ φιλοτίμως καὶ τῶν ἄλλων ἀπάντων  
 ἐπιμεμέλην[ται, ὧν αὐτοῖς]  
 οἱ τε νόμοι προσέταττον καὶ τὰ ψηφίσματα τοῦ δήμου,  
 ἐπαινέσαι [τοὺς πρυτ]-  
 ἀνεις τῆς Ἀντιοχίδος καὶ στεφανῶσαι χρυσῶι στεφάνῳι  
 κατὰ τὸν [νόμον εὖ]-  
 15 [σ]ε[β]ε[ί]ας ἕνεκα τῆς πρὸς τοὺς θεοὺς καὶ φιλοτιμίας  
 τῆς πρὸς τὸν δ[ῆ]μον τὸν  
 Ἀθηναίων· ὅπως ἂν δὲ καὶ τὰ Χαλκεῖα θύσωσιν τῇ<ι>  
 Ἀθηνᾶι τεῖ Ἀρχη[γέτιδι τ]-  
 ῆς πόλεως καὶ ἔχει καλῶς καὶ εὐσεβῶς τῇ βουλευῇ καὶ  
 τῷ δήμῳ τὰ π[ρὸς τοὺς]  
 [θεοὺς], διαχειροτονῆσαι τὸν δῆμον, ὅπόσον δεῖ  
 αὐτοῖς μερίσαι εἰς τῇ[ν διοίκησ]-  
 [ιν τῆς θυσίας]· ὅ τι δ' ἂν διαχειροτονοῦντι τῷ δήμῳ  
 δόξει, μερίσαι τὸ[ν ταμίαν τ]-  
 20 [ὧν στρατιωτικῶν] καὶ τοὺς ἐπὶ τῇ διοικήσει· πόρον  
 δὲ ὑπάρχειν ἐκ τῶν εἰς τὰ]  
 [ψηφίσματα ἀναλίσκ]ομένων ὑπὸ τῆς βουλῆς.  
 ἀναγράψαι δὲ τόδε τ[ὸ ψήφισμα]  
 [τὸν γραμματέα τὸν κατὰ πρυτ]ανείαν εἰς στήλην  
 λιθίνην καὶ σ[τῆ]σαι ἐν τῷ]  
 [πρυτανικῶι, εἰς δὲ τὴν ἀναγρα]φὴν τῆς στήλης  
 μερίσαι [τ]οὺς ἐπ[ὶ τῇ διοική]-  
 [σει τὸ γενόμενον ἀνάλωμα].  
 col 1.25 — — — — —  
 — — — — —  
 col. II.25 — — ρος Ἀπολλοδώρ<ου>  
 [Ἐπικράτης Ἀλεξιάδου  
 — — — — — οὖς  
 col. III.25 Θουχάρης Καλ — —  
 Φιλέας Φιλομβρό[του]  
 Λυσιφάνης Ἴσο — —

In line 7, the *prytaneis* are praised “for performing properly the scheduled sacrifices for which they were responsible while in office”, including the Stenia for Demeter and Kore. Meritt and Traill note in regards to the timing of the decree that the Stenia had been celebrated and the Chalkeia was about to take place. And, in line 16, the Chalkeia is mentioned again, with reference to the source of funding for the sacrifices to Athena. Here the epithet for Athena (partially reconstructed) is Archegetis, not Ergane. Parker seems to feel that the two are not necessarily incompatible, “since Archegetis was a general honorific title not attached to a specific cult.”<sup>20</sup>

20 Parker 2005, 464. Parke 1977, 93, on the other hand, saw the Archegetis epithet as a separate aspect of Athena. See also

A third inscription, SEG XXI.478, was found in 1952 as spolia in a modern house to the south of the Church of the Holy Apostles in Athens.<sup>21</sup> Another honorary decree for the prytany, the non-stoichedon stone dates to 118/7 BCE.<sup>22</sup> Meritt provided the following reconstruction of the text:

SEG XXI.478:

[ἐπ]ὶ Ἀθηναίων ἄρχον[τος ἐπὶ τῆς ---- ca. 11 ----πέμπτῃς  
 πρυτ[ανείας ἧ] Ἰσίδωρος Ἀ[πολλωνίου Σκαμβωνίδης  
 ἐγραμμάτευεν·]  
 Μαιμακτηριῶνος [ἔκτῃ (?) ἱσταμένου, ἔκτῃ (?) τῆς  
 πρυτανείας· ἐκκλη]  
 σία κυρία ἐν τῷ θεά[τρῳ] τῶν προέδρων ἐπεψήφισεν  
 --- ca. 9 ---]  
 5 κωνος Κρ[ω]πίδης καὶ [συμπρόεδροι·] ἔδοξεν τῷ  
 δήμῳ [·]  
 Σωκράτης Ἀριστίωνος [ἐξ Οἴου εἶπεν· ὑπὲρ ὧν  
 ἀπαγγέλλουσιν]  
 οἱ πρύτανεις τῆς Πανδιον[ίδος ὑπὲρ τῶν θυσιῶν ὧν  
 ἔθυσον τὰ πρὸ τῶν ἐκκλη]  
 σίων τῷ τε Ἀπόλλωνι τῷ Π[ροστατηρίῳ καὶ τῇ  
 Ἀρτέμιδι τῇ Βουλαίᾳ]  
 καὶ τῇ Φωσφόρῳ καὶ τοῖς ἄλ[λοις θεοῖς οἷς πάτριον  
 ἦν· τοῖς δὲ Χαλκεῖ]-  
 10 [οἰς ε]ἶ[δ] τὴν παννυχίδα τῇ Ἀ[θηναίᾳ τῇ Ἐργάνῃ  
 ἐποιήσαντο καὶ]  
 [τὰς] ἄλλας θυσίας πάσας [τὰς καθηκούσας ἐν τῇ  
 πρυτανείᾳ ἔθυσ]  
 [σαν κ]αλῶς καὶ εὐσεβ[ῶς] κα[ὶ] φιλοτίμως κατὰ τὰ  
 πάτρια, ἐπεμελήθη]  
 [σαν δ]ὲ κα[ὶ] τῶν ἄλλων -----  
 -----]

Meritt inserted Χαλκεῖοις at lines 9–10, for which a *pannychis* (an all-night feast associated with a number of different festivals) is to be held. With the leading letter “A,” Meritt reconstructed “Athena Ergane” in line 10. Thus, with this reconstruction, Meritt interpreted the inscription as praising the *prytaneis* for their celebration of the Chalkeia and specifically in honour of Athena Ergane. This is plausible, particularly given the number of possible letters that could fit into the lost fragments of the stone. Moreover, the names Chalkeia and Ergane are completely reconstructed, as well as the majority of Athena’s name.

Lambert 2014, 19; he argues that in the 3rd century, Athena is Archegetis at the Panathenaia and the Chalkeia.

21 Meritt 1963, 22–23; presumably, Meritt meant within the bounds of the Agora.

22 Meritt 1963, 23.

## The Chalkeia and Athena Ergane

If Meritt's reconstruction of SEG XXI.478 is correct, this is one of the few, if not the only, instances where the Chalkeia is mentioned in relationship to Athena Ergane, as well as the only occasion where a specific ritual act is associated with the Chalkeia (the *pannychis*). Athena's epithet "Ergane", or "worker", was applied first by the Athenians, as Pausanias tells us.<sup>23</sup> As Ergane, Athena was the recipient of dedications by artisans beginning in the 5th century BCE.<sup>24</sup> The etymology of Ἐργάνη, as discussed by Jane Harrison, is linked to the word ἔργον, so that Athena Ergane is tied closely to both the cultivated earth as well as to the crafts of men and women, from the "needle and loom" to "the chisel and hammer."<sup>25</sup>

Athena Ergane is therefore both an agricultural goddess, similar to Demeter, as well as a goddess of craftsmen, both in weaving, metalwork, and also pottery. As a goddess of crafts, she was the recipient of numerous dedications by artisans on the Acropolis, including votive inscriptions and plaques as well as pottery.<sup>26</sup> Therefore, the epithet Ergane is an appropriate aspect of Athena to be honoured in a festival for craftsmen, about which Harpocration and the Suda have informed us, as well as the festival in which the weaving of the Panathenaic *peplos* was begun.

## Visual evidence: craft and the Athenian Acropolis

Scenes illustrated on Classical Athenian vases and sculpted reliefs illustrate Athena's relationship with craftsmen, as their patron and as a participant. One example, a fragment from a red-figured calyx-krater, was found on the Acropolis (Fig. 4.1).<sup>27</sup> The fragment, attributed to the Painter of the Louvre Centauromachy and dated to the mid-5th century BCE, is decorated in two registers. In the upper register, artisans are shown at work in a pottery workshop, two of them on a potter's wheel while another to the left works on a completed pot. In the lower register, a youth leads an animal towards a veiled woman. If this is a scene of sacrifice, as has been



Figure 4.1. Fragment of a red-figure calyx-krater from the Acropolis. Attributed to the Painter of the Louvre Centauromachy, c. mid-5th century BCE. Athens, National Archaeological Museum Acropolis Collection 2.739 (G41) (BAPD 216018).

suggested, then here we have two closely related scenes of dedication: the art of the craftsmen and the sacrifice, emphasised together.<sup>28</sup>

Although Athena is not depicted in this fragment, if this vessel is a dedication to her, then her presence is palpable. As van Straten stated in regards to this vase, "a sacrifice to Athena had been paid for with the *aparche* or *dekate* of the income from the potter's shop, and at the same time this vase was presented in remembrance, as a votive offering."<sup>29</sup> Whether it was Athena Ergane specifically to whom these dedications were made is not clear, but it seems not unreasonable to suppose so, as scholars have done with a marble relief of the second quarter of the 5th century BCE that depicts a seated craftsman handing something to an *aegis*-clad Athena, who stands before him.<sup>30</sup>

A clear connection between Athena and the arts, especially pottery, is also seen on a number of vases in which she appears alongside craftsmen at work. For example, on the exterior fragment of a *kylix* attributed to the Euergides Painter, she is witnessed as a visitor in a workshop of artisans (Fig. 4.2).<sup>31</sup> This cup, dated between 515 and 500 BCE, was found on the Acropolis

23 Paus. I.24.3: "πρῶτοι μὲν γὰρ Ἀθηναίων ἐπωνόμασαν Ἐργάνην..."

24 According to Loraux 1993 (who cites Raubitschek 1949, 429), Athena is not honoured as Ergane before the 5th century BCE.

25 Harrison 1894, 270.

26 For analysis of these dedications, see Scheibler 1979 and Wagner 2000. Lewis 2010 studies images of craftsmen in relationship to the archaeological context of pottery.

27 Athens, National Archaeological Museum, Acropolis Collection inv. no. 2.739 (G41) (BAPD 216018). Another small fragment of this vase, depicting a draped male figure, is illustrated in Beazley 1942, pl. 5, 3.

28 Van Straten 1981, 94, and Carpenter 2007, 409. Beazley 1942, 14–15 also discusses these fragments.

29 Van Straten 1981, 94.

30 Acr. 577 (=LIMC II s.v. "Athena" n. 52): According to the museum label, as well as Hurwit (2004, 31), this Athena is Ergane, and van Straten (1981, 93) suggests that the craftsman – whose trade we do not know – gives to her his *aparche*.

31 Athens, National Archaeological Museum, Acropolis Collection inv. no. 2.166 (BAPD 200761).



Figure 4.2. Fragment of a red-figure kylix from the Acropolis. Attributed to the Euergides Painter, c. 515–500 BCE. Athens, National Archaeological Museum, Acropolis Collection inv. no. 2.166 (BAPD 200761).

and was most likely a potter's dedication to Athena.<sup>32</sup> The fragment depicts Athena, seated and facing to the left; she is identifiable by her common attributes, including the helmet she holds in her outstretched hand, as well as her shield and snaky *aegis*. Behind her, a man draped in a cloth squats on a low platform over his project (which is not preserved), holding in his hand a small hammer. In front of Athena, we can see the fragmentary arm of a potter seated at a wheel while a woman approaches him with an outstretched hand. The supervisory role of Athena is clear as the craftsmen quietly attend to their tasks, blending aspects of a simple genre scene that is attended by Athens' most prominent patroness.<sup>33</sup>

An even more elaborate example, the so-called "Caputi Hydria" attributed to the Leningrad Painter and dated to the second quarter of the 5th century BCE, depicts Athena alongside two winged female figures (*Nikai*) as she arrives at the workshop of potters who are decorating elaborate, large vessels.<sup>34</sup> Here, somewhat curiously, a craftswoman sits to the side while Athena and the *Nikai* are in the

process of crowning the male figures.<sup>35</sup> It has been argued that rather than terracotta, here they are producing vessels made of metal.<sup>36</sup> In either case, the images from vase painting discussed here attest to the close connection that Athena Ergane shared with craftsmen of different types, including those working in metals as well as pottery.<sup>37</sup> They illustrate vividly the presence of Athena in the creation of and inspiration for a variety of crafts, including pottery, and the relationship between this aspect of the goddess and the crafts of the *polis*.<sup>38</sup>

32 See Wagner 2000, 385.

33 I am thankful for Carol Lawton's careful observations on the parallels between this scene and Athenian document reliefs (1995, 124–125).

34 Milan, Coll. Torno (BAPD 206564).

35 Hurwit 2004, 263 n. 37. The vase was found in a woman's grave in Ruvo. Venit 1988 discusses the interpretation of the seated craftswoman in the context of working Athenian women.

36 See, for example, Green 1961 and Webster 1972, 174 and 248.

37 Such as, for example, the exterior of a *kylix* found in Vulci by the Foundry Painter of about 480 BCE (Munich, Staatliche Antikensammlung inv. no. 2650; BAPD 204341) in which Athena stands among men in a workshop, one of whom works on a sculpture of a horse. See LIMC II s.v. "Athena," 961–964, for more examples from the Archaic through Hellenistic periods.

38 See the discussion in Verbanck-Piérard 2008, especially 56–57.



### Athena's patronage of the arts: literary sources

The bond between Athena and the production of crafts dates back to Homer, where together with Hephaistos she (as Pallas Athena) was responsible for teaching the art of silver- and gold-working to a craftsman, a skill that is likened to the means by which she and Hephaistos adorn and disguise Odysseus:

ὥς δ' ὅτε τις χρυσὸν περιχεύεται ἀργύρῳ ἀνὴρ  
ἴδρις, ὃν Ἥφαιστος δέδαεν καὶ Παλλὰς Ἀθήνη  
τέχνην παντοίην, χαρίεντα δὲ ἔργα τελείει...

Imagine a craftsman overlaying silver  
With pure gold. He has learned his art  
From Pallas Athena and Lord Hephaistos,  
And creates works of breathtaking beauty...  
(*Od.* VI, 232–234)<sup>39</sup>

Elsewhere, Athena is a weaver herself, creating her own *peplos* in sources from Homer and Hesiod to Apollonios, which reminds us of the vital role that weaving plays in the hands of mortals, particularly women, during her festival of the Chalkeia.<sup>40</sup> Sometimes, Athena is even depicted in vase painting as an artisan herself, such as on an *oinochoe* from Capua of about 470–460 BCE that shows her modeling a horse.<sup>41</sup> The potter's wheel is also said to have been invented by her, according to the 5th-century BCE poet Kritias, and in another poetic fragment of the 6th century, Athena's assistance is invoked in the firing of pots in exchange for payment from the potters.<sup>42</sup>

Athena's patronage of crafts is analogous to that of another deity invoked by artisans, Hephaistos. Echoes of the two performing similar roles can be found in Athens, and both had close associations with craftsmen and artistic practice. For example, a foundry where bronze was sold is attested in the vicinity of the Hephaisteion, and there are also the remains of a metal foundry on the south slope of the Acropolis.<sup>43</sup> Goette hypothesises that it was at this foundry that votive statues (presumably dedications for Athena) for the Acropolis were made, and looming above it, on the Acropolis itself, stood a building called the Chalkotheke, in

which these bronze ritual gifts were stored.<sup>44</sup> Furthermore, both Athena and Hephaistos were worshipped together in the Hephaisteion.<sup>45</sup> Pausanias describes encountering the sculptural group of Athena and Hephaistos by Alkamenes in the temple, which he is not surprised to see, given his familiarity with the story of Erichthonios.<sup>46</sup> Both deities were also depicted seated next to one another on the Parthenon, watching over the central *peplos* scene of the east frieze.<sup>47</sup>

In addition, Hephaistos, like Athena, is occasionally depicted in Attic vase painting as involved in the production of crafts. For example, an amphora in Boston attributed to the Dutuit Painter and dating to about 480 BCE depicts Hephaistos forging new armor for Achilles.<sup>48</sup> As he polishes a shield with a gorgoneion device, Thetis stands before him, and greaves, a helmet, and metalworking tools hang on the wall in the background. The forging of new armour for Achilles by Hephaistos is described in *Iliad* XVIII, the lengthy ekphrastic exegesis that concerns the cosmological aspects of the shield. Given the Dutuit Painter amphora and other images of Hephaistos in his workshop, it is no wonder, then, that Hephaistos also came to be associated with the Chalkeia, as Phanodemos and Pollux have told us.<sup>49</sup> The images of him as a metalworker give weight to the idea that he may have been worshipped at the Chalkeia along with Athena, although concrete evidence for such homage is far from complete.

Images such as these attest to the strong association between Athena, as well as Hephaistos, with the production of crafts, particularly bronzes. But what about depictions of the Chalkeia itself, as a festival in honour of Athena Ergane? Images of festivals from the Classical world are rare as it is, with one of the few obvious examples being the

39 Translation is from Lombardo 2000, 91; see also Hurwit 2004, 31. Athena also appears as Ergane in the *Odyssey* at 13.288–289; see Hurwit 2004, 27.

40 See the discussion in Milanezi 2001, 323f. Also see Demargne (1984, 961) for other objects crafted by Athena.

41 Berlin, Antikensammlung, inv. no. F2415 (BAPD 209569), attributed to the Group of Antikensammlung. As Hurwit (2004, 31) states, “here, she is both Athena Ergane because she makes and Athena Hippias because of what she makes.”

42 Wagner 2000, 385.

43 As mentioned in Andoc. I (*De Mysteriis*), 40, and also Bekker, *Anecdota Graeca*, I, 316, 23; see Wycherley 1957, 98–99.

44 Goette 2001, 48 (fig. 6, no. 23, shows the location of the metal foundry). See La Follette 1986, *passim*, for an overview of the Chalkotheke, as well as Goette 2001, 24.

45 As attested by August. *De civ.* D. 28,12 see Wycherley 1957, 98. See also Pl. *Prt.* 321d–e, although whether their “shared dwelling-place” (οἶκημα τὸ κοινόν) refers to the Hephaisteion is unclear. See Mansfield (1985, 282) for more sources.

46 Paus. I, 14, 6: “καὶ ὅτι μὲν ἀγαλμά οἱ παρέστηκεν Ἀθηναῖς, οὐδὲν θαῦμα ἐποιούμην τὸν ἐπὶ Ἐριχθονίῳ ἐπιστάμενος λόγον.” See Harrison 1977.

47 Figures 36 and 37 of the east frieze of the Parthenon. Parke 1977, 92. See also Neils 1996, fig. 8.9.

48 Boston, Museum of Fine Arts, inv. no. 13.188 (BAPD 203143). See Woodford 1993, fig. 71. There are four other vases with this subject matter, one black-figure and three red-figure (including the tondo of the Berlin Foundry Cup, Berlin, Antikensammlung, inv. no. F2294/BAPD 204340); see LIMC IV s.v. “Hephaistos,” 631, nos. 1–5.

49 For other images of Hephaistos in his role as craftsman, see LIMC IV s.v. “Hephaistos,” 632, nos. 15f. All of these date to the early 5th century BCE, according to Pipili 2000, 161.



Panathenaic procession depicted on the Parthenon frieze.<sup>50</sup> Yet it is worthwhile to consider the Chalkeia in the context of a number of artistic sources, although there is yet to be found one that definitively depicts the festival. Most helpfully, Bérard analysed one fragment of a vase, to be discussed momentarily, alongside the following fragmentary text, which has been attributed to Sophocles:

(a) βᾶτ' εἰς ὁδὸν δὴ πᾶς ὁ χειρῶναξ λεώς,  
οἱ τὴν Διὸς γοργῶπιν Ἐργάνην στατοῖς  
λίκνοισι προστρέπεσθε (b) <καὶ> παρ' ἄκμονι  
τυπάδι βαρεῖα...

Go into the road every man who works with his hands,  
who turn towards the fierce-eyed daughter of Zeus,  
with *liknoi* set upright and with anvil  
and hammer heavy in weight...  
(Soph., *Fr.* 844)

Parker aligned two separate fragments to form a cohesive passage. (a) is quoted in Plutarch's *De Fortuna* 4, 99a and Clement of Alexandria's *Protrepticus* 10.97.3, and (b) is from Plutarch *Praecepta gerendae reipublicae*, 5, 802b.<sup>51</sup> The two fragments refer to a specific ritualistic act, the carrying of *likna*, shovel-shaped wicker baskets or winnowing fans that are often associated with the worship of Dionysos, but are here meant as offerings to the "fierce-eyed daughter of Zeus" (τὴν Διὸς γοργῶπιν Ἐργάνην).<sup>52</sup> Certainly this is meant to be Athena, not only for the use of her epithet Ergane, but also the emphasis on her as γοργῶπιν, "fierce-eyed."<sup>53</sup>

The image that Bérard connected with this passage is a fragment from the neck of a red-figure amphora attributed to the Pan Painter (Fig. 4.3).<sup>54</sup> Discovered on the Acropolis, the amphora fragment has been dated to between 485 and 455 BCE. It depicts at least two male figures, one of whom is clearly carrying a *liknon*, and Simon suggested that they are

manual labourers walking in a procession.<sup>55</sup> The idea that it is a procession associated with the Chalkeia in particular was first posited by Bérard, who came to the conclusion that the figures were either advancing towards the Acropolis or to a common sanctuary of Athena and Hephaistos, such as the Hephaisteion.<sup>56</sup> In addition, Bérard suggested that in this procession the men would have carried not only *likna*, but also their tools, which they would offer to the goddess.<sup>57</sup> He based his argument on both the Pan Painter's fragment as well as the description of Sophocles, whose text dates to slightly later than the vase.

Bérard was not, however, the first to connect this fragment of Sophocles with a festival concerning Athena Ergane. Pollard, for example, also drew a comparison between the Sophocles fragment and Athena Ergane, "Patroness of Toil", deducing that in the festival of the Chalkeia, winnowing fans must have been set up along the processional route.<sup>58</sup> And before Pollard, in 1894, Jane Harrison also saw this passage as associated with the Chalkeia, with the χειρῶναξ λεώς as the Athenian craftsmen.<sup>59</sup> The scepticism of Robert Parker, however, reaffirms the difficulties of fragmentary text and fragmentary vessel: without knowing the specifics of either ritual or image, it is tenuous to associate the two with certainty.<sup>60</sup> On the other hand, the poetic fragment may be the best possible evidence for the festival of Athena Ergane and the Chalkeia; it certainly refers to a procession for the goddess, and the Chalkeia is the only known festival in honour of her in this guise.

### Weaving Athena's Peplos: Chalkeia and Panathenaia

Perhaps of greatest importance, it is with Athena that one of the most famous works of art of ancient Athens is associated: the Panathenaic *peplos*. As a goddess of all crafts, it has been argued that her female nature made her particularly well-suited to be a patroness of women's work.<sup>61</sup> Amongst the most prominent of all textiles created by women, the *peplos* presented to Athena was an elaborate garment that was woven beginning in the Chalkeia. The timing of the weaving was significant: the month of Pyanepsion witnessed a number of festivals that all had emphases on the cultivation of the soil, such as the Proerosia, Pyanopsia, and the Thesmophoria.<sup>62</sup> As the soil was tilled, Athena's

50 Although even this has been open to debate. For a summary of scholarship concerning the frieze, begin with Simon 1983, 58–72. More recently, see Harrison 1996.

51 Parker 2005, 465.

52 The discussion in Jane Harrison 1991, 517–534 serves as a good starting point for various usages of the *liknon*. She points out that the dedications of *likna* would "fit the autumnal return from the harvest to winter work," corresponding to the time period of the Chalkeia in the month of Pyanepsion. Bérard 1976, 107 discusses the ways in which he associates the *liknon* with Athena Ergane specifically.

53 A seldom-used term that generally seems to apply to Athena in particular; see also Soph. Aj. 450.

54 Athens, National Archaeological Museum, Acropolis Collection inv. no. 2.166 (BAPD 206306).

55 Simon 1983, 38.

56 Bérard 1976, 111.

57 Bérard 1976, 112.

58 Pollard 1965, 47–48.

59 Harrison 1894, 270.

60 Parker 2005, 465. Verbanck-Piérard 2008, 56 also pointed out that this could be any festival of Athena, not just the Chalkeia.

61 Barber 1992, 105.

62 Parke 1977, 93. In addition, Scheid and Svenbro (1996, 18 and 177 n. 42) link this time period to a moment in mid-November when "cranes give the signal to the Greek peasant to begin



Figure 4.3. Fragment of a red-figure amphora from the Acropolis. Attributed to the Pan Painter, c. 485–455 BCE. Athens, National Archaeological Museum, Acropolis Collection, inv. no. 2.618 (BAPD 206306).

*peplos* was also crafted. Once woven, it was carried in procession and presented to Athena nine months later in the Great Panathenaia, a festival that took place every fourth year on 28 Hekatombaion.<sup>63</sup> The *peplos* was woven with scenes from the Gigantomachy, and thus had a narrative function, and its potential visual aspects have been discussed broadly.<sup>64</sup> Furthermore, the textile as a physical object was an integral part of the Panathenaic procession: it served as a sail on a wheeled ship that passed through Athens along the Panathenaic way before being presented to the goddess on the Acropolis.<sup>65</sup>

As a goddess of both professional artisans and women working in the *oikos*, Athena Ergane covered all realms of craft production, both private and public. Weaving was

the craft with which she was most intimately linked, and she is thus an appropriate deity to associate with the most famous gift that was also bestowed upon her.<sup>66</sup> Images of women weaving are abundant in the Classical world, although none can be tied to the Chalkeia with any certainty. A series of votive plaques, for example, may depict either Athena Ergane or simply a woman in the act of weaving. Although they have been interpreted in a variety of ways, their presence on the Acropolis suggests that they were dedications by a weaver to the goddess herself, perhaps in her guise as Ergane.<sup>67</sup>

Moreover, images from vase painting and possibly even sculptural reliefs tell us much about the process of weaving. For example, a small *lekythos* of about 550–530 BCE attributed to the Amasis Painter shows scenes of women working wool on both sides of the vessel (Fig. 4.4).<sup>68</sup> The shoulder of the vase depicts a seated woman wearing a *peplos*, surrounded by youths and dancing girls.<sup>69</sup> The body of the vase shows standing women, some of whom prepare the wool for weaving, while others spin, fold cloth, and work on an upright loom. It was suggested by Karouzou that these women are preparing the *peplos* of Athena, accompanied by a ritual dance on the shoulder of the vase.<sup>70</sup> Connecting the two scenes between the body and shoulder of the vase could therefore provide a ritualistic and religious dimension to the act of weaving.

More recently, Olga Palagia examined two fragments of marble reliefs from Athens.<sup>71</sup> Both date to the 4th century BCE and were excavated on the Acropolis. Palagia associated both reliefs with the cult of the Three Graces, interpreting them as votive dedications.<sup>72</sup> On one relief (Fig. 4.5), a girl to the left of a Cybele-like figure sets up a warp to begin weaving, while in the other relief, another girl is in the process of working the warp. Both reliefs are quite fragmentary, and it would be desirable to see the rest of the scenes together and how the young women who are weaving are related to the other figures. Palagia associated

his labors,” citing, among other sources, Hes. *Op.* 448–451 and Ar. *Av.* 710–712. This draws a subtle parallel between the acts of sowing the land and the creation of the *peplos* through weaving. See also Håland 2004 for more information on the process of weaving.

63 Simon 1983, 39 and 55. The shaping of the Greater Panathenaia is generally attributed to Peisistratus and his sons; see Robertson 1992, 90–93 for a brief summary of the arguments.

64 The literary sources for the *peplos* and its Gigantomachy scene are discussed in Barber 1992, 112, Lefkowitz 1996, 79, and Mansfield 1985, 3. See, for example, Eur. *Hec.* 466–474, which has been discussed most recently by Stamatopoulou 2012.

65 See Barber 1992, 114 for the literary sources attesting to this.

66 Hurwit 2004, 27 and 33.

67 See Hurwit 2004, 33 and fig. 37 (=Acr. 13055), a terracotta plaque of c. 500 BCE. This is also suggested by Demargne 1984, 1018.

68 New York, Metropolitan Museum of Art, inv. no. 31.11.10 (BAPD 310485).

69 Neils 1996, 186 suggests that the seated woman could be an enthroned goddess.

70 Karouzou 1956, 44. Von Bothmer 1985, 186 is less certain, comparing the dance scene to a similar scene on another vase by the Amasis Painter that has a wedding theme (New York, Metropolitan Museum of Art, inv. no. 56.11.1 [BAPD 350478]).

71 Athens, Acropolis Museum, inv. no. 2554 (discussed here) and 3306, Palagia 2008, fig. 6.

72 Palagia 2008, 34.

each of these fragments with the setting up of the loom for the weaving of Athena's *peplos*.<sup>73</sup> Like the Amasis Painter *lekythos*, however, this specific identification still seems uncertain, although it serves as more evidence for women weaving, and they could very well be specifically tied not only to the Graces but Athena as well, given their findspot on the Acropolis.

During the Chalkeia festival, the task of weaving the Panathenaic *peplos* of Athena was undertaken not by the craftsmen of bronze, but instead by two (or more) young Athenian girls called either the *arrephoroi* or the *ergastinai*.<sup>74</sup> There is much confusion over the terminology regarding the weavers of the *peplos*, including whether they were priestesses, young girls from aristocratic families, or professionals specifically commissioned to weave the *peplos*.<sup>75</sup> Sourvinou-Inwood argued that they were different ages, representative of the three stages of Athenian women's lives and therefore symbolic of all Athenian women to be involved in the weaving of the *peplos*.<sup>76</sup> Regardless of who exactly these women or girls were, or what titles they bore, it is interesting to note that the amount of time between the Chalkeia and the Panathenaia is nine months, corresponding to the nine months of human gestation, leading up to the birth of Athena.<sup>77</sup> Although ritual weaving of garments was performed for other deities, such as Hera and Apollo, it was only in the case of Athena that the garment was placed on her cult statue on the Acropolis.<sup>78</sup> Presumably, then, this act of weaving would have taken place at the Chalkeia every fourth



Figure 4.4. Black-figure *lekythos*. Attributed to the Amasis Painter, c. 550–530 BCE. New York, Metropolitan Museum of Art, inv. no. 31.11.10 (BAPD 310485).



Figure 4.5. Marble votive relief with young woman at the loom. 4th century BCE. Athens, Acropolis Museum, inv. no. 2554.

73 Palagia 2008, 34.

74 There is only one reference to the *ergastinai* in ancient literature, and it comes as a definition from Hesychius: “<ἐργαστῖναι> αἱ τὸν πέπλον ὑφαίνουσαι.” As the ones who “weave the *peplos*,” their name has thus come to be associated with the ritual. Hesychius groups this definition under the term *diazesthai* (from διάζομαι), the verb for hanging the warp on the loom and preparing it with loom weights, Barber 1992, 113. Mansfield 1985, 2 attributes the *peplos* that was woven annually for Athena's statue to the *arrephoroi* specifically (this, however, is argued by Dillon 2002, 58). Elsewhere, Mansfield sees the *ergastinai* as a “poetic (?) synonym for the *arrephoroi*” (280). Sometimes, too, they are referred to as *parthenoi*: see Palagia 2008, 34.

75 Regarding the weavers as priestesses, recall the Suda passage above: “ἐν ἧ καὶ ἱέρειαι μετὰ τῶν ἀρρηφόρων τὸν πέπλον διάζονται.” See Barber 1992, 113 for a summary of the arguments, as well as Mansfield 1985, *passim*, and Connolly 2007, 39. Mansfield 1985, 7 wished to assign the *peplos* woven every four years to professional weavers, for example.

76 Sourvinou-Inwood 2011, 268.

77 See Scheid and Svenbro 1996, 178 n. 43.

78 For an overview of dedications to Apollo and Hera, see Surtees 2014, 245–246. See also Mansfield 1985, 443 and Barber 1992, 106 n. 11.



year in advance of the Greater Panathenaia.<sup>79</sup> According to Robertson, the Chalkeia, along with the Promethia (another festival for Hephaistos), “helped to inspire the arrangements of the Panathenaia,” its timing closely aligned with the more greatly celebrated festival.<sup>80</sup>

Furthermore, Parke saw the nine-month gap between the Chalkeia in Pyanepsion and the Panathenaia in Hekatombaion as a practical alignment and economical choice, leaving sufficient time for the production of the elaborate tapestry. In addition, Parke argued that the probable lack of good weather that began towards the end of Pyanepsion would have made the weaving of the garment a suitable activity for indoor work.<sup>81</sup> Lasting up to the ninth months between the start of the Chalkeia and the Panathenaia, the weaving of Athena’s *peplos* was for certain the central ritual of this time period.<sup>82</sup>

At the same time, it is quite attractive to see the Chalkeia’s timing in relation to that of the Panathenaia as more symbolic. The *peplos*, as a kind of birthday gift to the goddess, is the most tangible link between the Chalkeia and the Panathenaia, as the weaving of it was first undertaken at the former festival and presented to the goddess at the latter.<sup>83</sup> As Shapiro states, “The fact that it links several festivals of Athena suggests that the *peplos* was one of the central and most sacred objects in Athena’s cult and was of great antiquity.”<sup>84</sup> Thus the Chalkeia stands out among other Athenian festivals in that it is not only the place where the *peplos* was being warped on the loom, but it also seems to be deliberately structured within the Athenian festival calendar to correspond to the gestational cycle that led to Athena’s birth at the Panathenaia.

## Conclusions

The procession and moving display of the *peplos* of Athena would have concluded on the Acropolis, where the elements of Athena’s birth and its presentation visually came together on the east end of the Parthenon, in both the pedimental sculpture of Athena’s birth and the frieze’s central *peplos*

scene.<sup>85</sup> The Chalkeia was thus intrinsically bound to the Panathenaia by virtue of both the timing of the festival as well as its central ritual, the weaving of the *peplos*. As the word for craftsmen in general (τέκτων) is etymologically linked to the verb to beget or engender (τίκτω), so too does the weaver help to usher in Athena’s birth nine months later at the Panathenaia, starting at the Chalkeia with the *peplos*’ creation.

Despite our paucity of evidence, the Chalkeia surely had a much more prominent position within the Athenian festival calendar than has been considered in the past. We still know comparatively little about what happened at the festival beyond the weaving of Athena’s celebrated *peplos*, which must have been the central focus. Parke, however, posited that the festival would have included a holiday from labour and a nightly feast of sacrifices, best evidenced by the reading of *IG* II<sup>2</sup> 674, discussed above.<sup>86</sup> With little known about the festival’s other happenings, we are left to look at the abiding aspect of this festival of Athena: the weaving of the *peplos*. By examining the extant literary, epigraphical, and possible visual sources for the Chalkeia, we see that while they are not numerous, they do add to a more comprehensive understanding of the festival.

In particular, a connection to Athena, patron goddess of the city of Athens, is emphasised. In her guise as Ergane, too, the Chalkeia served as the festival highlighting her associations with crafts, especially her most famous work of art, the Panathenaic *peplos*.<sup>87</sup> The connections of the Chalkeia with Hephaistos are also a strong possibility, and merit further exploration, especially given the relationship between Athena and Hephaistos that is witnessed in Athenian iconography in addition to their shared roles as deities of craftsmanship. Yet although Hephaistos’ role in the festival is not entirely clear, it thus seems more reasonable to associate the Chalkeia primarily with Athena, for it is to her that the Panathenaia was celebrated, and our evidence strongly suggests a relationship between the Chalkeia and the Panathenaia by virtue of the *peplos*. As the preeminent festival of the Athenians, then, the Panathenaia can therefore be concretely linked to the Chalkeia by the means of the renowned gift of the *peplos*, woven at the festival of Athena Ergane and presented as the focal point at the festival of Athena’s birthday.

79 Parker 2005, 464. This leaves us to speculate what occurred at the festival during the other three years – perhaps simply dedications to Athena Ergane, sacrifices, etc.

80 Robertson 1992, 94.

81 Parke 1977, 93.

82 Mansfield 1985, 284.

83 Lefkowitz 1996, 79 refers to the *peplos* as a “birthday gift”. Parker 2005, 266 acknowledges the link between the Panathenaia and other Athenian festivals, including the Chalkeia and the Arrephoria.

84 Shapiro 1989, 25–26.

85 See Neils 2001, 67–70 for more discussion.

86 Parke 1977, 93.

87 See Mansfield 1985, 283.



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## Dress, code and identity-of-place in Greek religion: Some cases from Classical and Hellenistic Athens

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Perhaps the most renowned example of how textiles interacted with ancient Greek religious contexts is the annual renewal of Athena Polias' *peplos*. On the one hand, the question of how the new robe for Athena was made and by whom has been answered satisfactorily; on the other hand, it is much more difficult to interpret the meaning and effect of the robe in the complex rituals of Athena Polias. Recently, the late Christiane Sourvinou-Inwood proposed an interpretation that took to explain the religious content of the series of rituals binding the complexity of this key event of the Panatheneia festival.<sup>1</sup> However, Sourvinou-Inwood did not pay much attention to the specific role of Athena's

textiles in this particular context; in fact, this seems to be the case in most modern interpretations of the use of textiles in ancient Greek cult.<sup>2</sup> Therefore, this paper will propose a new approach to the study of human interaction with textiles in religious contexts, and in particular how recent perspectives from cultural geography can support in-depth analysis of this vexed field. We will insist on using tenets of modern cultural geography as analytical tools to further our understanding of how textiles underpinned, supported and functioned within Athenian cults of the Classical and Hellenistic periods. Moreover, we will suggest a new approach to the study of identity formation within the religious sphere of the supplicants and of the cult and sanctuary itself by applying notions derived from the field of environmental psychology.

### Human geography and environmental psychology

In numerous ways, recent studies have expounded how tenets of cultural history and human geography can advance the study of the cultural history of ancient Greek societies.<sup>3</sup> The scope of this paper does not allow for a detailed survey of recent positions, but some scholars of Mediterranean Antiquity pursue this new trend by addressing "space" and "spatiality" without clearly taking a stance on the important

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<sup>1</sup> See Sourvinou-Inwood 2011, esp. 263–311; also *Sourvinou-Inwood* 1990 for a lucid clarification of Greek polytheistic religion as the dominant ideological framework of the *polis*. We follow the assumption that there were two different *peploi*: an annually produced one for the olive wood cult statue of Athena Polias, made by the *arrhephoroi* and *ergastinai*, where the weaving began at the Chalkeia festival; and the quadrennial *peplos*, which was presumably woven by professional weavers and, most likely, displayed as a tapestry in either of the Athena temples at the Acropolis. See Sourvinou-Inwood 2011, 267–269 for further references. Most likely, the quadrennial *peplos* was hung behind the cult statue of Athena Polias, the object of worship at the *Panatheneia*. In relation to the faith of the old *peplos*, a question raised at the conference, also refer to Sourvinou-Inwood 2011, 303. The old *peploi* were most likely stored in the sanctuary (or perhaps separately within the *temenos*, 303, n. 121). The only reasonable assumption is that the old *peploi* remained at the sanctuary, or at least stored somewhere within the *temenos*, given that they were dedications to the goddess.

<sup>2</sup> Some interest has been paid to the implements, material culture and personnel involved in the sacrifice: general introduction in Bruit Zaidman and Schmitt Pantel 1992, 46–52; introductions and contributions in Dignas and Trampedach 2008.

<sup>3</sup> E.g. Krasilnikoff 2009; and 2015; Kristensen 2012; 2014; Scott 2010; 2012; Fitzjohn 2007a; 2007b; 2013.

issue of definition and approach. We need to address challenging questions of what is offered to cultural analysis by the “spatial” turn, which must include a commitment to understanding the implications of this theoretical and methodological approach. The mere number of possible and impossible definitions and applications of *space* should in themselves be warning enough against too rigid approaches to this challenging field.

In his milestone “experiential” monograph *Space and Place. The Perspective of Experience* from 1977, the influential “humanist geographer” Yi-Fu Tuan pondered:

...the meaning of space often merges with that of place. “Space” is more abstract than “place”. What begins as undifferentiated space becomes place as we get to know it better and endow it with value ... The ideas “space” and “place” require each other for definition. From the security and stability of place we are aware of the openness, freedom, and threat of space, and vice versa. Furthermore, if we think of space as that which allows movement, then place is pause; each pause in movement makes it possible for location to be transformed into place.<sup>4</sup>

Clearly, Tuan contemplated the basic elements of human “experiential” orientation in terms of supplementary and complementary notions of *space* and *place*, which he saw as uniform modes of conceptualising and operating the “life-worlds” of human societies. Thus, basically, Tuan pondered, every human society – past and present – tends to perceive social life within the two fundamental spatial spheres of *space* and *place*. However, according to Tuan, *space* is a less well-defined category that adheres to the more easily comprehended and operated category of *place*.

Ostensibly, apart from the multiple challenges posed by Tuan’s “fluid” definition of *space* when applied in spatial analysis, there are numerous reasons for not choosing *space* as a feasible category for cultural analysis and sociological behaviour. Subsequently, others have pondered the feasibility of “structured space” and 1st, 2nd and 3rd space in order to operationalise this basic notion of human geography.<sup>5</sup> Thus, recent studies in social anthropology and cultural geography should prompt caution as to the indiscriminate appliance of the *space* and *place* notions.

Admittedly, the notion of *place* is not less problematic than *space*, but for other reasons. For scientific and practical reasons, we insist on developing recent observations by Tim Ingold, suggesting that basic human orientation is anchored

in sequences of hierarchical *places* that change order and character in the course of time, rather than more or less infinite spaces.<sup>6</sup> At one level, humans in social contexts tend to share *places* and the specific characteristics that define these *places*; at the personal level, however, individuals maintain a certain degree of “control” of their individualised interaction with *places*, which is the case in relation to personal dedications to and “consultations” with divinities.

Hence, the notion of *place* rather than *space* makes sense when applied to sanctuaries and cults, because it most readily complies with our understanding of individual and collective human interaction with religious institutions.<sup>7</sup> Basically, in a practical sense this approach makes it possible for groups to approach a certain *place* – e.g. a sanctuary or a statue of a god – because they share a common understanding of the religious fecundity of a specific religious *place*. However, elements of the same location may “speak” differently to individual supplicants and thus form individualised forms of approach to any given form of *place*. As an example, and in a concrete form, this distinction would apply to civic collective adherence to the overall nature of the Greek sanctuary as *place*, whereas dedications of a private nature would ensure for the individual supplicant that each sanctuary represented a special private *place* different from that of other supplicants.

*Place* has many definitions, but in this context we will narrow the perspective to the two-fold implication of *place* as it is presented in the field of environmental psychology.<sup>8</sup> Proshansky once elucidated the importance of *place* for self-identification or creation of a distinct *place-identity*.<sup>9</sup> Identity-of-place, on the other hand, refers to the unique character of a specific *place*, thus essentially defined by its distinct and potentially unique features of a material and mental nature.

Greek sanctuaries are good examples of what constituted *places* with distinct and unique sets of *identity-of-place*. Basically, the identity of this particular kind of *place* was made up of the material elements of the sanctuary: sacrificial implements, altars, buildings, temples, etc., but also members of the cult and religious personnel associated with the specific cult and its *place*, as well as – potentially – the deeds, actions and thoughts of these people, ranging from the *pompē*, purification, sacrifice, butchering, and subsequent banquet to cultic re-enactments and their socio-political implications. This forms, moreover, the basis for the creation of a distinct *place-identity*, which is derived directly from interaction with and adherence to the specific

4 Tuan 1977, 6. See Tuan 1979 and 1991 for further elaboration of his tenets.

5 Soja 1996 contributed to developing the notion of “thirdspace” from Lefebvre’s 1974 notion of “lived space”.

6 Ingold 2009. See Ingold 2000 for multiple examples of his fundamental “dwelling perspective.”

7 Ingold 2009 versus Massey 1997 and 2005, esp. 130–145.

8 Relph 1976; Proshansky 1978; Proshansky *et al.* 1983.

9 Proshansky *et al.* 1983.



*identity-of-place* in question.<sup>10</sup> In practice, this created individual and collective identities, *i.e. place-identities* with unique adherence to specific *places* of a religious nature.<sup>11</sup>

### Textile and clothing as iconographic codes

The symbol system of ancient Greek religion advocated by the Paris School essentially consisted of material and written elements – evidence to us – and a set of actions or events, which in concert underpinned the key mythologies of individual cults.<sup>12</sup> The structuralist claim that myths and mythologies constituted a vital element of the dissemination of cults obviously makes sense only when associated with the key elements of cult, such as the bloody animal sacrifice, iconography, architecture, drama or what Bruit and Schmitt called “systems for representing the divine”.<sup>13</sup>

The iconographic codes of individual gods varied from cult to cult, which represented for worshippers, priests and cultic personnel vital venues for repeated re-enactment of cultic key mythologies.<sup>14</sup> Thus, the most important element of the cult as *identity-of-place* was its representations of central mythologies, which were constantly nursed and commemorated. Hence, in its totality, this formed an important element of the accumulated cultic *event-scape*, which reflected a coherent system for representing the divine. Evidently, textiles, clothes and costumes constituted important requisites of dramatic communication, and participation in these activities contributed to the formation of individual as well as collective identities specifically associated with the cult in question.

It has been claimed that cultic drama constituted a vital element of cultic activity in the Archaic through the Classical periods, but whether or not this was actually the case is a matter of scholarly dispute.<sup>15</sup> For our purpose it is of some importance to establish the omnipresence of cultic drama and thus whether we should expect clothes and textiles to have had a specific “religious” function in all of those contexts where theatre-like structures have been found in or

adjacent to religious precincts. It has been argued that the mere existence of theatrical remains is evidence enough to suggest the very existence of cultic drama, but this seems to us a profoundly impressionistic argument: we do not have enough evidence to support the omnipresence of cultic drama and cannot deduce from the existence of theatres inside, or adjacent to, sanctuaries that “cultic drama” was in fact performed at these locations.<sup>16</sup>

Moreover, previous scholarly encounters with “cultic drama” fail to acknowledge potentially shifting roles of drama throughout different historical developments, and in the wider perspective it is important to evaluate religious innovation in relation to its sensitivity to historical development.<sup>17</sup> Certainly, the tragedies of Sophocles and Euripides, and comedies of Aristophanes and Menander, were re-staged in Athens, but also “exported” outside Attica to the effect of constituting new contexts and meanings of their display at new locations (this trend was in fact a powerful means to changing the *identity-of-place* also outside Athens from the late Classical period onwards).<sup>18</sup>

However, as for the “literary drama”, the Archaic through Classical Athenian Dionysian *agones* were indeed part of the cult itself. Obviously, the Great Dionysia in Classical Athens made use of textiles for the performances on stage, where actors ceased to be human individuals, instead being transformed into mythical figures or even gods. The drama did not directly re-enact the rituals but addressed important issues, such as (especially old) comedy commenting on the contemporary situation and tragedy allowing spectators to go through a *katharsis* watching the play. For an instant, the spectators viewed the world from a divine perspective. Additionally, tragedy raised important issues, like for example Aeschylus in his *Persai*, where the Athenians

10 Krasilnikoff 2015, 199.

11 Insistence in earlier memory studies by Halbwachs 1980, Nora 1996 and Assmann 1995 and 2005 on the collective character of memory is in our view not sufficient to explain the many divergent directions of religious development in the Archaic through the Hellenistic period.

12 Bruit Zaidman and Schmitt Pantel 1992 still represents a good introduction to this particular approach. Recent critique by Kindt 2009 and 2012 of the *polis*-religion tenets of being too narrowly focused on civic interaction fails to appreciate recent advances in the study of Greek religion: see review by Bravo 2014.

13 Bruit Zaidman and Schmitt Pantel 1992, 215–228.

14 Bruit Zaidman and Schmitt Pantel 1992, 215–228.

15 Nielsen 2002, 12–17, 81–88.

16 Also, advocates of cultic drama distinguish between “literary drama” and “cultic drama”, thus failing to take into consideration the fact that the tragedies and comedies of Attic Drama (which were actually performed in a “religious” context) did not reflect specific mythological themes that underpinned and displayed in a dramatic form the mythologies of *e.g.* the Dionysus cult of which they were actually a vital part. Clearly, Athenian “literary” drama was intimately associated with the Dionysian *agones* of the “great Dionysiai”, and in that capacity closely associated with the specific *identities-of-place* and derivative *place-identities* of the Dionysus cult. Thus, it seems more relevant to comprehend the extant literary dramas of Athenian origin as belonging to a different and larger portion of dramatic performance, which took place in the Classical through the Hellenistic periods.

17 See *e.g.* Garland 1992; Bruit Zaidman and Schmitt Pantel 1992, esp. 207–214 on the case of Mantinea; Krasilnikoff 2015 on the case of the Athenian Acropolis. See also Parker 1996, 152–153, 163 on authorisation of new gods.

18 Csapo 2010, 95–103.

ventured to explore responses to the victory of 479 BCE.<sup>19</sup> Generally, however, the figures articulated issues on stage in voices of the past and with the help of theatrical costumes disguising the actors' personal appearances. This is an obvious case of how textiles functioned as pivotal elements displaying the identity-of-place of the Dionysus theatre, or rather the *temenos* of Dionysus Eleuthereus.

Elements of myths and mythologies were re-enacted in various settings: from re-staging the death and birth of divinities to the display of holy objects along with re-enactment of key events in some of the Demeter cults (things laid down and reappearing again, e.g. the *thesmoi* of the *Thesmophoria* reappearing at the Skira).<sup>20</sup> Re-enacting cult did not necessarily involve a huge amount of spectators – exemplified by the fact that the inner building of the Telesterion in Eleusis was not altered in size, while the outer building went through several expansions throughout the centuries. Of course, we do not know exactly in what way – it was a mystery cult after all – but we may, as others before, ponder whether this was due to the physical place where the re-enactment took place – the actual spot where the gift of Demeter was to be revealed as the key point of the ritual.<sup>21</sup>

The performative element of cultic re-enactment was, however, not the only context where supplicants and religious personnel interacted directly with the central elements of the cult. The temporality of the cultic activities – to refer to Tim Ingold again – was essential for the religious rationale of the cult. Cult held a strong element of repetition, and repetition highlights the spatial dimensions of human constructs. This means that the religious display of purification, sacrifice, and consumption of sacrificial meat at the subsequent banquet involved interaction with *place*.

Textiles could form an essential part of the creation of *identity-of-place*. We began the paper with a reference to the annual event of providing the Athena Polias with a new *peplos*. The *pompē* that took off at the Dipylon Gate consisted of the dressed up participants who formed the visual elements of the procession as *identity-of-place*. However, the textiles in the Greater Panathenaia also constituted an important element of the *pompē* and the *event-scape* that, following the Panathenaean Road across

the civic centre of Athens, took in Athens proper as its physical *space*.<sup>22</sup>

Not so much the *peplos* itself but the clothing of the various groups of participants were the sustaining element provided by textiles. The Panathenaia itself represented a coherent *event-scape*, including the procession and the donation of the *peplos* to Athena Polias preceded by musical and athletic competitions that took place at three separate places within the civic centre, concluding with horse races at the *hippodrome* at the agora. Textiles thus contributed to the definition of the key theme and religious fecundity of the cult, and thus to defining the *identity of place* of its religious *places*.

The potential of rituals and cult associated with Athena Polias impinges on the very creation and existence of Athens, thus associating and celebrating the birth and present might of 5th-century BCE imperial Athens.<sup>23</sup> The *identity-of-place* of the Acropolis and the *place-identities* generated from adherences to the religious complexities of the location were clearly created by making and manipulation of textiles, clothes and robes. Apart from the complexities associated with the *peploi* of Athena, the locations functioned as a *lieu de mémoire* of the Persian war, and Athenian imperial power also involved manipulation with robes and armour: The infamous hoplite panoply donated to Athena at the Greater Panathenaia represents an example of how clothes and textiles were objects invested with symbolic value for the sake of demonstrating political and hegemonic supremacy.<sup>24</sup>

### Cross-dressing and place-switching

Textiles constituted important implements in gendered contexts, foremost in *rites de passage* to which we shall return shortly, but also in other aspects where the (re-)enacting persons were in a state of transformation: an obvious case was the actor. All actors were male, but sometimes, and often as main characters, playing women. This apparent paradox is made explicit in Aristophanes' *Ekklesiazousai*, where the male actors play women dressing in male clothes in order to gain control of the political sphere. The men were ridiculed, as exemplified by Blepyros and his neighbour. In fact, clothing played an important role in cults and myths related to Dionysos. Thus, in Euripides' *Bacchai*, Pentheus

19 Goldhill 1988.

20 Chandor 1981 remains fundamental for the study of Demeter's religious "rationale". See also her piece on the Thesmophoria from 2008 (now under the name of Stallsmith); Parker 2005, 327–368 contextualises the mysteries in Athenian religion. Compare with Johnston 2013 for the "polyvalence" of mythologies and ritual in Demeter cult, arguing convincingly that each and every ritual was not matched with a corresponding mythology.

21 See e.g. Parker 2005, 351–352.

22 Graf's (1996) distinction between centripetal and centrifugal *pompai* represents an attractive modern functionalist approach to the Classical *pompē*.

23 The very outline of the Athenian Acropolis is disputed. See Ferrari 2002 for the resurrection of the Dörpfeld theory and the refutation by Pakkanen (2006). For Athens and the Acropolis as *lieux de mémoire*, see Jung 2006; also Kousser 2009; Martin-McAuliffe and Papadopoulos 2012; Krasilnikoff 2015.

24 Parker 1996, 142–143; Hurwit 1999, 139.

dresses up as a woman in order to watch the Bacchai ritual, and for this sacrilege he is killed by his own mother, thus meeting his predestined fate.

This transformation of role and gender by way of cross-dressing can be extended to Aristophanes, who made Mnesilochos do the same, compelled by this brother-in-law Euripides to dress up as a woman in order to spy on the women at the Thesmophoria. Neither of the cases is ritual re-enactment, but they do emphasise how the correct, gender-defined dress code must be acknowledged in the “religious” context of Dionysian drama.

The symposium may not strictly speaking be a cultic gathering; it was, nonetheless, a place where Dionysus was invoked to supervise the drinking. The leader of the party could dress like a Scythian or a woman, thus providing him with the identity of “other”. Besides, by assuming this new phenotype, the leader of the symposium facilitated the establishing of a specific, albeit temporal, confined identity-of-place, created by the gathering itself and dissolved again when the party broke up.

Previous scholarship has been intrigued and bewildered by what appears to have been transvestite or gender-switching activities in the contexts of Dionysus cults.<sup>25</sup> Clearly, as stated above, Dionysus’ close association with the theatre and its display of double or hidden identities (for both character and actor) exemplified by costume and mask also involved issues of gender. The nature of the evidence for cross-dressing is mainly iconographic, and it seems to be the case that the proper scene for this type of activity – men dressing up in women’s clothing – is the symposia and the *komoi*, the event *per se* where one would expect Dionysus to be at the heart of matters. Parker associated this particular form of cross-dressing with men’s desire to become maenads “... and a man who wishes to come close to the god must imitate their tradition”, which allowed for men to gain access to spheres normally reserved for women, where “intoxication without wine” was “normally reserved for women.”<sup>26</sup> This interpretation is somewhat in conflict with the often-repeated dichotomy of male “rationality” versus female compliance to “nature”. Thus, we find more substance in Roger Just’s famed *dictum*, arguing that in the world of Aristophanes – and the world of comedy rather than tragedy – females are “ruled by their physical desires”: their desire for food, drink and sex.<sup>27</sup>

Now, changing roles, gender – and clothes – is what Dionysus did; the catalyst is wine, representing the god himself constantly lurking and waiting to induce insanity

and austerity in the person who literally “drinks” the god.<sup>28</sup> However, choosing to dress in women’s clothes offers an alternative way to approach Dionysus, compared to the risky and socially degrading display of drunkenness. Hence, developing the language of human geography in this context, this particular form of cross-dressing associated with Dionysus offers to males the opportunity of gaining access to spheres of female religious activities by way of *place-switching*; moreover, it seems evident that intoxication by alcohol would have formed a logical component in the process leading to cross-dressing in the context of Dionysus’ cult. Basically, changing dress codes reflected changing functions associated with specific (religious) places and mirrored the close observance that was upheld by the ongoing place-switching of Athenian religion. The change of phenotype often accomplished by changing clothes or manipulation with textiles was a visible expression of the accumulated and ever-changing *event-scape* of Classical Athenian religion.

Also, the mythological contexts of Dionysus’ cults involved interaction with the city as *place*. At the Greater Dionysia, the processions taking place at the festival ensured that the city was re-appropriated by the Athenian population. Literally taking to the important sites of the city, renewing oaths and performing sacrifices, the Athenians confirmed, reclaimed and virtually performed a *rite de passage* in order to re-confirm their adherence to Athens proper.<sup>29</sup>

### Textiles and a gendered religious event-scape: *rites de passage*

Transition from one stage of human life to the next took the well-known form of *rites de passage*, whose symbolic language sometimes associated male and female candidates with gender-specific garments, fibres or fabrics. A wool thread or fillet was hung above the door to indicate the birth of a female baby, whereas the birth of a boy was announced by the display of an olive tree branch.<sup>30</sup> Thus, from the very beginning of human life, the socially gendered identity of male and female individuals was explicated through simple codes.<sup>31</sup> However, while the codes and actions indicating the transition of females from one stage of life to the next has called for much attention, *rites de passage* associated with male transgression have been less consistently explored. First, we shall explore the transition that involved female involvement with the divinities Artemis and Iphigenia and secondly the complexities of the Athenian Ephebeia.

25 Good studies of cross dressing are: Kurtz and Boardman 1986; Miller 1999; Parker 2005, 321–324.

26 Parker 2005, 323.

27 Just 1989, 157–165.

28 Bruit Zaidman and Schmitt Pantel 1992, 198–207, 221–222.

29 Bruit Zaidman and Schmitt Pantel 1992, 106.

30 Bruit Zaidman and Schmitt Pantel 1992, 64–65.

31 On gender performativity and construction, see Butler 1990.

The cult of Artemis Brauronia in Attica made use of cultic re-enactment in which textiles played a significant part as we learn from the Suidas: “Women playing the bear used to celebrate a festival for Artemis dressed in saffron robes; not older than 10 years nor less than 5; appeasing the goddess”.<sup>32</sup> The reason for this was retribution for the killing of a tame she-bear in the deme of Philaidai. Exploring the myth in detail, it becomes clear that juxtaposition of tame and wild is central: the she-bear was tame, though killed as a wild beast, and little girls need to be wild before they can become tamed in marriage.<sup>33</sup> This interpretation precludes that we perceive the *Arkteia* as rites of initiation. We may, however, also consider whether the she-bear was a symbol of the extreme boundary of the territory of Artemis whom the little girls (definitely pre-puberty) were to appease in expectation of the challenge of future married life. Other versions of myths associate Artemis with a she-bear, for example Artemis Mounichia.<sup>34</sup> However, the cult at Brauron was where little girls re-enacted rituals as little bears dressed in a certain way, or perhaps shedding their robe.<sup>35</sup> Although we do not know the details of the ritual re-enactment, we can observe that textiles constituted an important aspect of the cult. If we take the Suidas literally, all little Athenian girls went to Brauron to serve as little bears in the course of the 7th through 3rd centuries BCE, but obviously the little bears must have served as representatives of the entire generations of immature girls.<sup>36</sup> Key events, where young girls could participate in the religious *event-scape* of the polis, are summed up in the *Lysistrate* 642–647. One woman in the chorus tells us how at the age of seven she served as one of the *arrhēphoroi*, at ten she pounded barley for Athena, then she served as a bear at Brauron, and finally, when she was grown up, as a *kanēphoros*. This is obviously not a career plan for an average Athenian girl, but a summing up of the

possible options of a fortunate, well-to-do maiden.<sup>37</sup> Yet, the identity of all of these options was influenced by textiles or almost-textiles. The role of the *arktoi* during the quadrennial Brauronia is ambiguous due to lack of unequivocal evidence. However, the central position of the Brauronian cult is clear, further substantiated by the existence of a Brauronion on the south side of the Acropolis, where the inventories were kept from at least 416 BCE.<sup>38</sup> Because Brauron, like a number of other important Artemis sanctuaries, was situated on the coast<sup>39</sup> the *pompē* of the Brauronia served to re-establish the religious *event-scape*, apparently attracting great attention in times of peace.<sup>40</sup>

There is thus no doubt about textiles sustaining *identity of place*, but clothes and other ornamental attributes also created a place-identity. The immature girls and maidens took on identity from participating by wearing certain clothes and dress items. In some cases we may refer to this as a cultic re-enactment, *e.g.* in relation to what possibly went on in Brauron; in other cases, the female element was part of the ritual as such, for example the *kanēphoroi*. However, because individual supplicants attended different religious contexts, it became possible to envisage accumulated individualised *place-identities*. This is also result of the range of dedications offered to Artemis at Brauron (and, of course, other places). Because textiles were central in women’s religious engagement, given that they constituted the primary female commodity,<sup>41</sup> clothes formed a profound sign of accumulated *place-identities*. Although the actual textiles are long gone, the fragments of the annually published lists of dedications survive. The Brauronian inventories (*IG* II<sup>2</sup> 1514–1531) comprise a great variety of textiles dedicated by, or on behalf of, women. As evidence for a study into textiles, methodologically speaking, these inventories are challenging because of the rich technical vocabulary and lack of detailed description of the garments,<sup>42</sup> but they serve nicely as evidence for the importance attached to the display of clothes and textiles at

32 Suidas s.v. *Arktos e Brauroniois* (trans. Suda On Line) (Byzantine Greek lexicon c. 10th CE): “*Arktos e Brauroniois*” (I was a bear at Brauron). Bruit Zaidman and Schmitt Pantel 1992, 67; see further Parker 2005, 238 for the excerpts dealing with the phenomenon at Brauron and Mounichia.

33 Osborne 1985, 165–167 discusses this: it is not clear how playing little bears prepared girls for childbirth as claimed by Cole 2004, 210. See also Parker 2005, 245–248.

34 Parker 2005, 238 synchronises the *aition* of bears associated with Artemis Brauronia and Artemis Mounichia, which is problematic. See also Osborne 1985, 162–163.

35 Sourvinou-Inwood 1988 remains fundamental; Parker 2005, 242–245, especially in relation to the *krateriskoi* and the dancing naked girls appearing on these vases.

36 As Parker suggests, we are perhaps to perceive this “as a universal right of access but restricted actual participation” for the Athenian girls, 2005, 233.

37 See Bruit Zaidman and Schmitt Pantel 1992, 67–68. On the nature of the *arktoi*, and for a thorough survey of various scholarly positions concerning the *arkteia*, see Parker 2005, 232–248.

38 Osborne 1985, 154–157.

39 Generally, the sanctuaries of Artemis were situated in the vicinity of dangerous passages or entrances, see Cole 2004, 178–185.

40 See Parker 2005, 230–231.

41 Milanezi 2005, 79–80.

42 See Cleland 2005, 87–90, who emphasises that we need to comprehend the inventories as descriptions of collections that serve to distinguish each item from the others.



Brauron.<sup>43</sup> Artemis was an important deity in the productive life cycle and thus the welfare of the *polis*. The female population of the *polis* frequented the cults of Artemis at central points in their lifetime. Artemis was a key figure in the gender-specific, religious *event-scape*. Women dedicated their clothes, garments and girdle to Artemis at menarche and after childbirth, while Artemis as the eternal virgin aided women whenever they shed blood.<sup>44</sup> However, the clothes of women who died during childbirth were dedicated to the nearby *heroon* of Iphigenia<sup>45</sup>; Artemis must not be contaminated by the clothes of someone dead.<sup>46</sup> This is exemplified in the dying scene of Euripides' *Hippolytos*, where Artemis flees at the moment of Hippolytus' death.

### The Athenian *Ephebeia*

Young males also went through *rites de passage* that involved textiles.<sup>47</sup> Although there is no strict consensus amongst scholars about the organisation of the Athenian *ephebeia* in respect to the pre-Lykourgian shape before 334 BCE,<sup>48</sup> there is no doubt that the *ephebeia* as *rite de passage* involved creation of an *event-scape*, which was partially visualised and underpinned by use of textiles. This involved admission to the rites as well as transition into adult

life.<sup>49</sup> Aristotle relates in *The Athenian Constitution* (chap. 42) about the scrutiny of the citizens-to-be on their 18th birthday, and at the end of the same chapter he explains the compulsory training of the *ephebes*. However, the *ephebes* obviously existed earlier, just as the scrutiny of young citizens preceeded the Lykourgian institution of *ephebeia*; likewise, the oath they swore appears to be rather ancient.<sup>50</sup> Aristotle explains that at the beginning of their first year, the *ephebes* were assembled under the *sophronistai*, one from each tribe. He further (42.3) explains that the *ephebes* "...first make a tour of the sanctuaries, and they proceed to the Pireus, where some do guard duty at Mounichia and some at Acte". In the first year, the *ephebes* were preoccupied with military training, after which they demonstrated their newly acquired skills at an assembly in the theatre where they received equipment enabling them to patrol the frontiers. Aristotle (42.5) adds that "These two years they spend on guard duty, wearing short cloaks" – i.e. the *chlamys*, which was a clear indication of their changing identity. Moreover, apart from serving as a "uniform", the *chlamys* also combined with the *ephebic* transition as process, thus associating these particular young males with a carefully orchestrated temporality or *event-scape* involving specific places (borders, patrol and sanctuaries). In effect, the *ephebeia* as process served to transform the citizen-to-be into a member of the citizen-collective with first-hand knowledge of the central identities-of-places of the *polis*, including some of its *lieux de mémoire*; however, the nature of the *ephebeia* allowed the individual *ephebes* to form collective as well as his own, individualised *place-identities*. In effect, the *ephebes* wore the *chlamys* during the state of transition from adolescent to mature man, which involved a range of rituals connecting them to the civic territory as well as indicating their transitory state when kept at the fringes of the *polis*-territory in their second year as *ephebes*.<sup>51</sup>

Evidently, the actual *rites de passage* did not in themselves constitute cult. Textiles constituted a vital element in *rites des passage* in terms of either indicating temporal status or objects that had to be discarded, assumed or destroyed in order to enable the individual to become a full-grown male or citizen – or a married woman who had given birth. These actions ensured that the citizens – male and female – would not pollute the religious environments they were about to enter into as full participants. By stating that they had "given up the cloak" or "served as bear" for Artemis,

43 Cleland 2005, 91 suggests that most of the garments were generally dedicated after use. However, in her discussion of rags in the inventories, Milanezi 2005 suggests that menstrual blood in the Classical period was considered *miasma*, and therefore the garments dedicated at the menarche (and after childbirth?) were washed. The considerable number of rags could better be explained as the outcome of a deliberate act of ripping the garments as they were consecrated to the goddess as opposed to the view that the clothes were ragged due to their advanced age.

44 Cole 2004, 213–218; King 1983.

45 See Ekroth 2003, 59–118.

46 Cole 2004, 119–120 believes that the unfinished garments in the inventories must have been dedicated on behalf of dead women. Parker 2005 does take into account that we have no evidence so far that women who died in childbirth had their clothes dedicated to Iphigeneia, but finds this likely to have taken place. See also Ekroth 2003.

47 For debates on the development of men's clothing, see Geddes 1987; Miller 1997, esp. 153–187; and Miller 2013 on inspiration from Persian and Near Eastern garments. On the vexed questions concerning the *ependytes*, see Miller 1997, 170–183.

48 Sommerstein 2010 chap. 3 argues against the belief that there existed any institutionalised ritual practise of adolescents' transition to maturity before the institution of the *ephebeia* of 334 BCE by Lykurgos. See, however, Vidal-Naquet 1981 and Chaniotis 2005, 46–55.

49 For the many elements constituting the *ephebeia*, see Vidal-Naquet 1981.

50 Rhodes 1984, 87. Ibidem for translations below.

51 See Endsjo 2000 on liminal space – the fringes of the polis territory – where *ephebes* and others earned admission to the ordered civic society. On the *periploi* – patrols at the borders and forts performed by the *ephebes* in their second year – see van Wees 2004, 94–95.

they were stating something important about their status and identity as citizens, but also – concurrently – pointing to the inescapable fact that by admission and adherence to central religious tenets of the *polis*, they were not (or no longer) threats to the religious order of the community. Textiles and clothes served to indicate how and why these important actions were taken.

### Concluding remarks: gods need places, too

At the end of the day, ancient Greek cults were places for interaction with clothes and textiles, and they constituted a vital part of the *identity-of-place* of religious *places* and events. Multiple elements of ritual were created as manipulations or situations that one way or the other involved clothes and textile. Moreover, in this particular context the gods needed to connect with their special *places* as well in order to form a specific *place-identity* of the specific cult in question, and clothes remained an important implement in that process.

Thus, now returning to Athena's *peplos*, we infer that the complicated process of producing and finally dressing Athena in her new *peplos* involved a bilateral activity that endowed the goddess with a new vital element of her identity as a divinity, while at the same time furnishing the sanctuary and the city with an annual update of the sanctuary's *identity-of-place*. Moreover, apart from renewal of the vital element of the cult, the "contract" was upheld to the extent that the *identity-of-place* of the cult was "updated", and the followers could continue to generate their personal *place-identities* by participation in a properly authenticated religious context.

In conclusion, much of what has been stated above abides with other objects and elements in Classical Greek religious contexts; what distinguishes clothes and textile from other objects found in religious contexts is that they communicated powerful codes of dress for women, men, and gods alike.

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## Priestly dress in the ancient Mediterranean: Herodotus as a source-book

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### **The conceptual role of garments in Herodotus' *Histories***

This paper aims to explore the way in which garments could hold a key position as historical signs and symbols in Herodotus' work. It could be attested that garments in Herodotus' work play a key role in three ways: first in the narrative, second, as hallmarks of cultural and political variation, and, finally, as indicators of a certain level of wealth and social class, which is further expounded in Herodotus' encounter with the Egyptian priests and within reports on priests and priestly garments.

In contrast to Homer's work, especially the *Odyssey*, in which textiles are mostly related to the *oikos* and private sphere, textiles in Herodotus are associated with the public sphere. While Homeric textiles are mostly coupled with women and their "deceitful" manners, as manifested in the cloak woven by Penelope,<sup>1</sup> the Herodotean textiles, because of their association to the political sphere, play a key role as components of the *Histories*. For instance, the conquest of the island of Samos by King Dareius is accomplished on the grounds that a red cloak was given as a gift to Dareius by a Samian man. This piece of clothing emerged as the reason for Samos' conquest due to the fact that Samos' capture was perceived as a response to the gift from the Samian Syloson, who was in exile and planned to regain his rule over the island, which the Samians had lost after the death of his brother Polycrates (3.139f., *cf.* same in 3.47).<sup>2</sup>

In another story, the strife between two women, Xerxes' lawful wife and the weaver of the cloak, Amestris and Masistes' daughter, Artaynte, which ends with the cruel death of the latter, marks Xerxes' inability not only to win the war against the Greeks but also to bring order to his own home:<sup>3</sup> initially, Xerxes falls in love with Masistes' wife, but he then decides that he prefers the latter's daughter, Artaynte, who becomes his mistress. During one of Xerxes' visits to Artaynte, he wears a robe, woven by his legal wife, queen Amestris. Notably, Amestris chooses the robe and Xerxes wears it in public, which leads to Amestris' discovery of his affair. As a result, she seeks revenge, not on Artaynte, but on her mother, Masistes' wife. Therefore, when Amestris is requested by Xerxes to ask for any favor she wants, she requests the life of Masistes' wife, who she then tortures and mutilates.

It is important to note, however, that the absence of clothing has equal significance to the story's meaning as does the presence of clothing. In particular, the story of Candaules' wife begins with an absence of clothing, as she unwittingly undresses herself before her husband's servant and ends with a textile. Specifically, Candaules, who is passionately in love with his wife, boasts that she is the most beautiful woman on earth and forces his bodyguard Gyges to

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their deals using, among other things, a κροκύς, a piece of wool.

1 See also Odysseus, disguised as a beggar (*Od.* 434–438), proving his identity as skillful deceiver and Block 1985, 1–11.

2 *Cf.* for textiles used e.g. in the political context of an oath, see *Hdt.* 3.8, where Herodotus describes how the Arabs close

3 For textiles playing a functional role in the *Histories* *cf.* further 1.82: the Argives, defeated by the Lacedaemonians, who had previously worn their hair long by a fixed custom, shaved their heads ever after and formed a law with a curse attached to it that no Argive should grow his hair and no Argive woman should wear gold until they recovered Thyrae. *Cf.* further in 5.87, 6.125, 9.76.



watch her while she undresses in order to affirm Candaules' statement. Gyges tries to refuse but, out of fear, agrees to Candaule's command and hides behind her bedroom door. The queen, however, notices him, and she immediately realizes what her husband has done. The following morning, in revenge for her husband's shameful act, she forces Gyges to choose between murdering Candaules, marrying her and inheriting the kingdom of the Heraclids, or killing himself so that he could never again, in blind obedience to the king, be persuaded to see what he had no right to see. Gyges chooses to murder Candaules. At this juncture, the lack of clothes, which provokes the act of revenge, works as a symbol of the Heraclids' deprivation of rulership for the benefit of the Mermnadae.<sup>4</sup>

In general, textiles are used in the *Histories* as symbols of ethnographical, cultural and political demarcation:<sup>5</sup> for example, the dress of the deceased wife of Periander, tyrant of Corinth, plays an important role in underlining the crude manners exhibited by a tyrant towards his subjects. Specifically, this dress is not burned with her corpse, which accounts for her freezing in Hades. Her husband raped her when she was already dead and for this reason she haunts Periander and urges him to give her back her clothes. In order to fulfill his dead wife's wish Periander undresses all Corinthian women and dedicates their clothes to her (5.92), not out of conjugal love, however, but because he wants her to reveal a hidden treasure's secret location to him.

Additionally, in 7.61–98, Herodotus dedicates a number of paragraphs to the description of the costumes of different nations. Herodotus describes the Persian army and its allies that took part in Xerxes' expedition against Greek Ionia with the intention of underlining the cultural heterogeneity of Xerxes' army and for contrasting it to the Greek army who was, at least culturally, homogenous: for example, in 5.49, Aristagoras, tyrant of Miletus, in an attempt to convince Cleomenes, king of Sparta, to help them against the Persians, employs, *inter alia*, a description of the unusual dress worn by the "barbarians" and then its abundance in colours (ποικιλία).<sup>6</sup> The latter's clothing and cultural variety is further manifested in their irresistible penchant, conveying their imperialistic desire, for adopting alien customs, including the adaptation of the Median uniform, because they considered it prettier than their own (1.135).<sup>7</sup>

In Attic tragedy, the term *poikilia* also alludes to a barbarian customs: Consider for example, the clothes of Xerxes in Aeschylus' *Pers.*, the costumes of the Asian maenads in Euripides' *Bacchae* or the robes that Medea offers to Creusa in Euripides' *Med.* 1159 (πέπλους ποικίλους) that cause her death.<sup>8</sup> Nevertheless, cf. the *poikilos peplos* of Athena in E. *Hec.* 465–474. Further, in the 5th century the colorful, *poikilia* clothes represent apart from barbarian mores, manners of tyranny: in Aeschylus' *Agamemnon*, the king Agamemnon refuses to walk on the colorful textiles as the barbarian Priam probably would have done;<sup>9</sup> however, the fact that he, after all, yields to his wife *peitho* and insistence and walks on the *poikilos* tapestry, indicates, according to Crane,<sup>10</sup> an arbitrary, autocratic, and ostentatious squandering of wealth by Agamemnon. Alternatively, as argued by Wagner-Hasel, the cloth is here used as a metaphorical reference to the coming death of Agamemnon, specifically to his purple burial shroud, implying the future tyranny planned by Clytemnestra.<sup>11</sup>

Moreover, in Herodotus, garments as representations of certain necessities seem to follow the demands of the local economy, which renders them subject to each location's resources. For example, Herodotus makes parallel references to linen and wool clothes made in Egypt (2.81), where flax was probably cultivated because the Nile-Delta provides them with fertile soil (2.14, see also Thucydides 1.6).<sup>12</sup> Colchis, a fabulously rich land (consider the various sources on the myths of the Argonauts), has the same method of working linen as Egypt, which, however, Herodotus never depicts. As stated by Herodotus, in general the Colchians are particularly similar to the Egyptians in many of their

4 Although Pythia vaticinates that vengeance would be wreaked on the fourth in line of descent from Gyges (*i.e.* Croesus).

5 Generally on clothes' dialectic in Herodotus see Sterghidou 2012, 77–90 and Sommer 2012, 257–264.

6 Cf. Grand-Clément 2015, esp. 410, 412 arguing on *poikilia* as associated with aristocratic lifestyle, *habrosunē* and barbaric customs. On colour in drama in general and *poikilia* in particular see Cleland 2002, 179, 153–172.

7 Cf. further on *poikilia* in relation to the Persians in 9.80, 9.82, 9.109 and Xenophon *An.* 1.5.8.

8 Nevertheless, cf. the *poikilos peplos* of Athena in E. *Hec.* 465–474.

9 See on that Alföldi 1955, 33; Blum 1998, 164; Wagner-Hasel 2007, 331–333. On the symbolism of the "carpet-scene" and the purple cloth, see further Lebeck 1971, 86.

10 Crane 1993, 117–136.

11 923, 926, 936, cf. Aeschylus' *Eu.* 460, ποικίλους ἀγρεύμασιν, *Ch.* 1013). Jenkins 1985, 123–132; Wagner-Hasel 2007, 332–333, 335.

12 In Greek imagery, linen was associated with Egypt; in Aeschylus *Supplices* 121 and 131 the Danaids coming from Egypt to Argos wear linen πέπλα, distinctive of their origin. The next reference to linen in tragedy as clothing-material is to be found in Euripides *Orestes*, where the Phrygian slave recounts that Helen who, for a long time, had been a resident in Troy and had adopted their habits, was weaving linen <clothes> as an offering for her dead sister Clytemnestra. For the predominance of linen in Egypt and for the early cultivation of wool see Wiedemann 1890, 197; Lloyd 1976, 341; Droß-Krüpe 2011, 14, 20–22; Nosch 2014, esp. 22–24.

lifestyle activities (2.105),<sup>13</sup> including their language, as they believed that they were descendants of the Egyptians (2.104). In Babylonia, too, a land which, according to Herodotus, is μακρῷ ἀρίστη τῶν ἡμεῖς ἴδμεν (1.193, [this land] is by far the best of all [lands] known to us) due to its fertile soil and advanced agriculture techniques people wear both linen and wool (1.195, 1.199).<sup>14</sup> Linen production, apparently, presupposed a thriving economy. For instance, Ctesias, in discussing the Cynocephaloi tribe in India, argues that it is the richest among them that wear linen garments (οἱ δὲ πλουσιώτατοι αὐτῶν λινᾷ φοροῦσιν).<sup>15</sup> In this land, which is situated at the *eschatiae*, i.e. one of the most geographically remote places of the world, where many *paradoxa* occurred, linen, according to Herodotus, was produced, not in fields, however, but on trees.<sup>16</sup> More precisely, during Sataspes' return from his expedition to Libya where he met king Xerxes, he comments on a distant country inhabited by small men who wore palm-leaf clothing.<sup>17</sup>

In contrast to the aforementioned, according to Herodotus in 5.12, the Persians did not practice the cultivation of linen (κλώθω λινόν) because their land was infertile (9.122), and then therefore, presumably, wear leather (1.71, οἱ σκυτίνας μὲν ἀναξυρίδας, σκυτίνην δὲ τὴν ἄλλην ἐσθῆτα φορέουσι). In the first book, Sardanis advises Croesus that there is no value in attacking men who wear leather trousers and other leather clothing, as this implies that they live in a harsh land and, for this reason, they are uncivilized. Similarly, Herodotus describes the Scythians as people who make costumes out of the skin of their dead enemies (4.64). In this case, the use of leather is associated with the toilsome nomadic life of the Scythians, who are similar to the nomadic Androfagoi in 4.106 and the Libyans in 4.186–189.<sup>18</sup> To bolster his argument with regard to the harsh Scythian way of life, he further reports that the Thracians wove their clothing of hemp, which is similar to linen. Linen was burned by the Scythians, who used its smoke to cleanse themselves (4.73–75). Libyan girls also wear goatskins (σκυτίνη) over their dress; moreover, the tassels

(θύσανοι) of their goatskin cloaks were thongs of leather (ιμάντινοι) dyed with madder (4.189).

## The priestly garments: The Egyptian priest's paradigm

### Linen vs. Wool

According to Herodotus, Egyptian priests (who were exclusively men, 2.35<sup>19</sup>) were only allowed to wear garments made of linen (λινέην ἐσθῆτα)<sup>20</sup> and sandals either of papyrus or of palmas (2.37, βύβλινα),<sup>21</sup> while men who wore wool clothes were not allowed to enter the temples.<sup>22</sup> Moreover, those who participated in Orphic and Bacchic orgies were not allowed to be buried in wool garments (2.81, εἰρίνεα εἵματα),<sup>23</sup> Herodotus, however, does not provide an explanation for this, because such occurrences belong, as he claims, to ἱρὸς λόγος (sacred speech), which one should avoid discussing (οὐκ εὐπρεπές). Nevertheless, Herodotus reports that the wool prohibition in Egypt seems to have been applicable solely to priests, while, as he notes further, secular people wear linen tunics and use wool shawls and blankets for warmth (2.81). In contrast to the prohibition of wool, linen is mandatory for the Egyptian priests because it is primarily associated with purity. In general, the Egyptians think that clothes must be kept “pure” and away from animals.<sup>24</sup> That is why, for example, when a pig accidentally touches someone, the latter is forced to throw himself into the river, fully clothed. For the same reason, swineherds were not allowed to enter temples (2.47).<sup>25</sup> This fear of the impurity of animals prevailed because Egyptians were generally very much concerned, even obsessed, with hygiene. In particular,

13 Linen, according to Herodotus, has two names: the Colchian type is called “Sardonian” by the Greeks; that which originates in Egypt is called Egyptian (2.105). Strabo 11.2.17 argues that Colchian linen was famous (τεθρύληται); see further Nosch 2014, 23–24.

14 In Babylonia and in Cyprus a wreath made of cord (θῶμυξ), adorns girls' heads in Aphrodite's sanctuaries during the ritual of sacred prostitution (1.199).

15 F45 FG rHist.

16 3.106, 7.65. This variety of linen was also known in Egypt, see below on 3.47. With further details on the subject see Droß-Krüpe 2011, 22–23.

17 4.43. See also Theophrastus describing wool-bearing trees (ἐριοφόρα δένδρα) in *Historia Plantarum* 4.7.7–8.

18 See also the Massagetae in 1.202, 215.

19 But see 1.54, 2.56, 2.171. Cf. Otto 1975, 92 (fn. 2).

20 Cf. also Plin. *NH* 19.14 on the use by the Egyptian priests of linen grown on trees.

21 See Lloyd 1976, *ad loc* and Lexicon Herodoteum ed. Schweighäuser 1830 s.v. Droß-Krüpe 2011, 26–29, thinks that βύβλινα works as synonym to βύσσινα clothes which were linen (cf. also Herodotus' *Hist.* 7.181).

22 Cf. the clothing regulation from the sanctuary at Cleonae in Sokolowski 1969, *LSCGS* 56.1–8.

23 See Weidemann 1890, 166 on 2.37. He argues that cleanness and “purity” are easier to achieve by using linen. On linen worn by priest and initiates see also Apul. *Met.* 11.9–10. Jones 1999, 251 refers also to the Gymnosophists of India and the Pythagorean sage, Apollonius of Tyana as wearing linen. On the ritual obligation to wear linen rather than wool see also Totti 1985, 149 and Parker 1983, 302.

24 Nevertheless, in 2.42 it is described that, once a year, the Theban priests dress the statue of Zeus with a ram skin.

25 They sacrifice pigs only for the sake of Dionysus and Selena in 2.47.

priests were circumcised, clean shaven,<sup>26</sup> and subject not only to vestimentary regulations but also to dietary ones (2.37). Before entering the temple, they purified themselves with water from the sacred lake.<sup>27</sup>

In contrast to the Egyptian priests, those who assumed priestly functions within the Persian society (e.g. the Persian Magoi, 1.140) were, according to Herodotus, very different not only from the priests in Egypt but also from all other humans. An indicative example of this forms the fact that the Egyptians consider it “pure” behaviour not to kill anything animate with the exception of sacrificial animals (2.45, 2.47), while the Magoi kill with their bare hands everything but dogs and human beings. Plutarch makes a similar reference in *De Iside et Osiride* 4, where he states that priestly garments of wool were forbidden during the Hellenistic and Roman periods, on grounds of impurity. Seemingly, he rejects the view that the priests wear linen garments “because of the color which the flax displays when in bloom, and which is like to the heavenly azure which enfolds the universe”<sup>28</sup> and asserts that they merely avoided anything that was associated with animals because they considered it to be impure.<sup>29</sup> Besides, he continues, flax provides a plain, clean garment adaptable to every season.<sup>30</sup>

Linen, more precisely, linen bandages, βυσσίνη σινδών, were also used, according to Herodotus, in the process of anointing mummies (2.86).<sup>31</sup> Furthermore, Egyptian priests, celebrating the descent of the god Rampsinitus, weave a cloth and bind it as a headband over the eyes of one of the participants in the ceremony, whom they then escort, wearing the cloth, *pharos*, made of linen, onto a road that leads to the temple of Demeter (2.122). In 3.47, Herodotus reports that in the sanctuaries at Samos and Lindos respectively, king Amasis dedicated two linen corselets into each of which many figures of animals were woven, as well as a decoration made of wood-wool, i.e. cotton (see also Necos offering his clothes to Apollo 2.159).

### Non-dyed vs. *poikilia*

Egyptian priests’ predilection for non-dyed linen apparel made a statement,<sup>32</sup> as did the fabric linen itself, in regard to purity (2.37, 81).<sup>33</sup> Indeed, if Egyptians observed even a single black hair on a bull, which was considered a sacred animal belonging to Epaphus (also called Apis), that bull was considered impure (2.38). The function of the sacral prescription of pure non-dyed linen was similar to the Greek regulation of white garments as a prerequisite for entering a temple. In this case, white clothes, in contrast to colourful and purple clothing, functioned as a guarantee for purity and simplicity,<sup>34</sup> despite the fact that white garments, like purple clothes (which were traditionally presented as a sign of power),<sup>35</sup> were also difficult and time consuming to produce, and were therefore expensive.<sup>36</sup> For instance, in Lindos, those who wanted to wear shoes when entering the temple had to wear white ones, which were not made of leather.<sup>37</sup> In Pergamon, the priest of a cult had to wear white clothing (*LSAM* 2.1–2). Pausanias informs us that the old priestess of the god Sosipolis was required to cover her head and face in a white veil (6.20.2–3).<sup>38</sup> Such strict instructions on dress code for entering the temple would, we could imagine, generate a trade in the required garments and objects,<sup>39</sup> but Herodotus does not provide any information on this regarding Egypt.

26 2.36, cf. Diogenes Laertius *Vita Pythagorae* 8.87. Cf. Wiedemann 1890, 154–158 and 166–170, with further parallels. See further Otto 1975 (vol. II), 256. Cf. also Sauneron 1960, 35–37.

27 Clarysse 2010, 277.

28 Babbitt 1936, *ad loc.*

29 cf. same in Philostr. *VA* 8.7.

30 Cf. Weidemann 1890, 167; Lloyd, 2007, *ad* 2.81, 295. But cf. Seiterle 1999, 251–254 discussing the woollen bands of Artemis Ephesias. He refers to their magical, healing and cleansing abilities. See further Carstens 2012, 146–147.

31 Cf. Weidemann 1890, 358–360 discussing the material βυσσίνη. See also Lloyd 1976, 362.

32 Although it is questionable whether Pharaonic Egypt was familiar with dyeing practices, the possibility that purple was worn in Egypt is not to be excluded; cf. McDowell 1993, 55, 57, Blum 1998, 21. Cf. also Spanier 1987, 42–50. But see e.g. Athenaeus (12.537e) who argues that, according to Ephippus, Alexander sometimes wore Ammon’s purple robe; see further Blum 1998, 21 (fn. 6).

33 Sauneron 1960, 35–42, esp. 40–41. See also Hall 1986, 22; McDowell 1993, 55, 57.

34 Cf. Sokolowski 1969, *LSCGS* 33, 68. Cf. Hdt 1.50 where εἴματα πορφύρεα, purple garments, were offered by Croesus to Apollo.

35 See Reinhold 1969, 300–304; Stulz 1990; Blum 1998; Nosch forthcoming.

36 As it was also, according to Jones 1999, 252, “difficult and labor-intensive to achieve and to maintain”; cf. Van Wees 2005, 15.

37 Sokolowski 1969, *LSCGS* 91; Cf. further *LSCG* 65 on white clothes prescribed for the mysteries in Andania, Sokolowski 1955, *LSAM* 35 for phratry cult in Priene, *LSAM* 14 for the temple of Asclepius in Pergamon. See on sumptuary laws regulating clothing Mills 1984, Culham 1986, Cleland 2002, ch. 7. On the sacred law that rules the Mysteries of Andania in Messenia referring to adornment cf. Gawlinski 2008, 148–150.

38 Connelly 2007, 91.

39 Cf. Dignas 2007, 163–177.

However, in practice, holders of priestly offices in Egypt wore distinctive clothes reflecting in this way “the archaic sobriety”<sup>40</sup> of the Egyptian culture, thereby recalling the royal profile e.g. of the sceptre-carrying Greek kings and priests in Homer.<sup>41</sup> According to Sauneron, in the New Kingdom and later periods, some priests wore a special headdress and leopard-skin cloak,<sup>42</sup> calling to mind cases of kings like Menelaus, who was wearing a panther skin in the *Iliad* 10.29–30, or Agamemnon who was covered with a lion skin (*Il.* 10.20–25).<sup>43</sup>

Although Herodotus records the statues of some high priests (2.143, ἀρχιερεὺς γὰρ ἕκαστος αὐτόθι ἱστᾷ ἐπὶ τῆς ἑωυτοῦ ζόης εἰκόνα ἑωυτοῦ), he intentionally avoids describing their fanciful garments. Instead, he dwells on the impartial non-dyed linen garment of the priests, which is similar to the Greek sacral dress decorum described above.<sup>44</sup> Herodotus’ choice of description of the Egyptian priests’ use of non-dyed linen, combined with the absence of any mention of different types and qualities of linen fabric, which marks the lack of any class distinction among the priests, brings forth the contrast to the Persian costume *poikilia*, discussed above, which is associated with a barbarian way of life, monarchy and its arbitrariness.<sup>45</sup> His choice eventually works as a narrative device for conveying an Egyptian culture based, in a similar way to Greek tradition, on equality and rectitude.<sup>46</sup> Indeed, Herodotus does not appear to draw much attention to priests highly positioned in the priesthood. His priests are rather assessed by scholars on the grounds of inaccurate information that they occasionally give to Herodotus,<sup>47</sup> although, generally, Herodotus considers the information that he obtains from

them to be indisputable (see e.g. 2.120).<sup>48</sup> The priests provide details on the ancient Egyptian culture to which, according to Herodotus, the Greek civilization owes its religious basis and intervenes in the past in order to correct Greek legend (cf. 2.113–120 regarding Helen).<sup>49</sup> It seems that his careful avoidance of connecting his Egyptian priests with an elite outfit that points to the upper class, which could create suspicion, since it evokes connotations of tyranny and arbitrariness, aims to protect them as significant informants for his *Histories*. On one occasion, Herodotus refers to a γραμματιστής, the Registrar of the Sacred Treasures of Athena in Sais (2.28),<sup>50</sup> while he mentions only one priest, namely Hephaestus’ priest who was also referred to as a king, named Sethon, in the second book of the *Histories*, although the existence of royal priests or priestly kings was widespread in Egypt and generally in the Mediterranean.<sup>51</sup> The Registrar gives an unsatisfactory reply to Herodotus’ question as to why the Nile flooded (it seems that priests are generally uninformed with regard to the nature of the River Nile). King Sethon also failed in his royal duties and only with the help of the god he was turned into a hero who countered the attack by Arabs and Assyrians.

A representative story regarding royal clothes and their degradation, i.e. connection to deceit and falsehood in the *Histories*, is told by Herodotus in 1.152. When the envoys from the Ionians and the Aeolians came to Sparta (they set about this in haste), they chose a Phocaeen named Pythenos, to speak on their behalf. He then put on a purple cloak so that as many Spartans as possible would assemble to hear him, and stood up to deliver a long speech in which he requested aid for his people. A similar story is told by Plutarch many years later. In his *Aristides* 5.7, Kallias, a δαδούχος of Demeter at Eleusis, came to the battle dressed in his priestly garb. Following the battle, some barbarians, considering him a king because of his long hair and headband, hence, bowed to the ground before him, took

40 See Sauneron 1960, 41.

41 *Il.* 1.15, Chryses, *Od.* 11.91, Teiresias. Cf. further on purple and royalty in Homer: *Il.* 24. 644–646, 9. 200, 10. 133–134, 10. 221, 10.352–353, 20.150–151, 24.796, *Od.* 8.84, 8.88, 21. 118, 19. 215–239 and Stulz 1990, 97–120; Wagner-Hasel 2007, 328–331; Van Wees 2005, 2, 14f., 24f.; Nosch forthcoming.

42 Sauneron 1960, 40–41; See also Winlock 1932, 186 and Te Velde 1995, 1733. This also describes the priestly dress-customs in Greece, see e.g. Culham 1986, 236; Jones 1999, 249. For the different priestly classes in Egypt see Plato *Timaeus* 21a–b and Winlock 1932, 186.

43 Cf. *Il.* 10. 177–178; see further Nosch, forthcoming.

44 On this selective principle of Herodotus see Hunter 1982, 50–92.

45 Cf. Alföldi 1955, 40–48; Stulz 1990; Blum 1998, 157; Nosch forthcoming.

46 Cf. Demaratus’ answer to Xerxes in *Hdt.* 7.102.

47 Egyptian priests of different shrines such as Memphis (2.2; 2.3), Thebes (2.3.1; 2.54; 2.55; 2.143), Heliopolis (2.3.1) and Sais (2.28.1) and priests from other shrines that are not named (2.10, 2.13, 2.19) serve Herodotus as informants.

48 See e.g. Wiedemann 1890, 28–31. Cf. further Lloyd 1976, 94–96 arguing against this reading (with bibliography on the subject).

49 Lloyd (1976, 93) speaks of “the cultural arrogance of the Egyptian priests”. Cf. further Hunter 1982, esp. 76–81, 86 and Evans 1991, 141–142. Generally, on Herodotus criticising Homer’s reliability see Thomas 2000, 267; Boedeker 2000; Boedeker 2002, 97–109; Goldhill 2002, 21, but also Nagy 1987. Cf. further Strasburger 1972; Rengakos 2005.

50 Wiedemann 1890, 31 and Evans 1991, 136–137.

51 2.141, cf. also 2.144 and 6.56; but see Diodorus Siculus 1.73.5. Cf. Wiedemann 1890, 170–171 discussing Plutarch’s position on kings as descending from the priests (*de Is.* 9). Cf. purple garments as presents from the Persian King Cambyses to the Aethiopians 3.20 and the latter’s reaction as they are unaware of the existence of purple (3.22).



him by the hands and showed him a heap of gold.<sup>52</sup> Again in Herodotus, the Ichthyofagoi describe the purple garments which they received as presents from King Cambyses, as δολερὰ εἵματα, “insidious” clothes (3.22). For them those garments represent the desire, πόθος, of the Persian king to conquer them.

## Epilogue

In summary, in Herodotus, garments in general and priestly garments in particular are used as a rhetorical device to mark cultural, political, and ethnographical differentiation. Fundamentally, the production of textiles points to economic and cultural variations. The depiction of the Egyptian priestly linen garments stands as the paradigm-product of a flourishing economy/culture now under the sway of leather-clad Persian barbarians. Moreover, the positive aspect of the non-dyed priestly dress<sup>53</sup> that is mostly revealed through its juxtaposition with the fancy multi-coloured dressed Persians and their despotic manners,<sup>54</sup> illustrates the mistrust which is implied throughout the Herodotean text of everything that denotes an abuse of power.

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52 Connelly 2007, 88.

53 Cf. Jones 1999, 255 for the term.

54 See the priest of the Eleusinian Mysteries as influenced by drama (Athenaeus 1.21.e), on this Gawlinski 2008, 162.

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## Headdress for success: Cultic uses of the Hellenistic *mitra*

Maria Papadopoulou

*Et tu, thyrsigera Liber ab India ... ac mitra cohibens cornigerum caput*

Seneca, *Phaedra* 753–755<sup>1</sup>

*mitra ferocem barbara frontem premens?*<sup>2</sup>

Seneca, *Hercules Furens* 471

*ausus es hirsutos mitra redimire capillos!*

Ovid, *Her.* [Deianira to Hercules] 9.63<sup>3</sup>

### The inherited complexity of the Hellenistic *mitra*

This paper investigates the cultic uses of the *mitra* in Hellenistic Egypt, *i.e.* how the *mitra* headdress is manipulated by Ptolemaic ideology in order to construct and endorse the ruler-cult in Ptolemaic Egypt. “Cult”<sup>4</sup> designates practices related to acts of religious worship and/or the group of people practicing these acts. The term is sometimes used pejoratively to designate practices structured around a set of rules which demand almost obsessive compliance. The semantically overlapping terms “rite” and “ritual”<sup>5</sup> also designate a set of rules and practices usually performed in a set order following a script. The institution of an official cult meant having a sacred place,

a day of feast and special sacrifices.<sup>6</sup> In practice, the Ptolemaic ruler-cult consisted in a number of strategies aimed at the assimilation of the Ptolemies to the gods, the proclamation of members of the royal family as gods, the organisation of public manifestations of worship towards them, and a textual and visual portraiture of the Ptolemies that suggested divine parentage and appropriated certain attributes of selected gods.

The multiplicity of the senses of textile and dress terms in the dictionary and their resistance to be paired with iconographic evidence is no news to textile researchers. The *mitra* is yet another such case. Both descriptive and functional definitions of the *mitra* are confusing, because clothing items labelled as *mitra* come in many shapes and sizes and can be worn in different ways on different parts of the body. They fall into two main categories: headgear and bodygear.<sup>7</sup> When tied around the body, the *mitra* carried

1 “And you, Bacchus from thyrsus-bearing India, ... and with a *mitra* you bind your horned head”.

2 “Whose warlike brow a barbarian *mitra* crowned?”

3 “You dare to crown your long hair with a *mitra*!” The *mitra* mentioned in all three extracts is worn by a Dionysos who triumphs over the Indians.

4 On the definitions of “cult” see Bredholt Christiansen 2009.

5 On theories and definitions of “ritual” see *e.g.* Bell 2009 and Snoek 2006.

6 Staal (1979, 3–9), a Vedic and Greek scholar, suggested viewing ritual as self-contained, self-absorbed practices that do not convey hidden meaning, but are goals in themselves.

7 As bodygear and headgear see LSJ s.v.; Cleland *et al.* s.v.; as headband see Lewis and Short s.v. *mitra*, *mitratus*. The *mitra* is first attested in Homer as a piece of armour, generally believed to be more substantial than a band made of cloth. As a female girdle it is first attested in Hesiod.

connotations of female sexuality.<sup>8</sup> When worn around the head, the *mitra* was associated with athletic prowess and distinction.<sup>9</sup> The *mitra* headdress can denote a type of cap, or a type of headband or hairband, or a strip of cloth of varying widths and lengths tied toward the back, the side of the head, or the forehead, above or below the hairline, covering the hair partly or completely, bound like a fillet or a turban, with long ends falling on or towards the shoulders.<sup>10</sup> The Greeks considered it to originate from Lydia, a land proverbial for its opulence, and hence it was a byword for foreign luxury and extravagance as opposed to Greek frugality.<sup>11</sup> The word *mitra* appears in the *Septuagint*<sup>12</sup> as the rendering into Greek *koine* of a Hebrew term denoting a type of headdress. This testifies to the fact that the Greek term *mitra* was deemed the appropriate term to “translate” the overtones of cult and power present in the Hebrew text into the cultural context of Ptolemaic Egypt.<sup>13</sup> The term survives in English in the sense of cultic male headdress.<sup>14</sup>

### The salience of *mitra*-bearing gods in the Ptolemaic dynastic cult

In what follows textual and iconographic evidence on the Hellenistic *mitra*-headdress will be examined in relation to the cults of Dionysos and Herakles, two *mitra*-bearing gods that the Ptolemies considered as their divine ancestors. Several studies concentrating on textual and iconographic evidence from the Archaic and the Classical periods have revealed the polysemy and multimodality of the *mitra*.<sup>15</sup> Its cultic use in the context of Ptolemaic Egypt, leaves, however, scope for further investigation. This paper examines textual

and iconographic evidence of the male headdress *mitra* in Ptolemaic Egypt. The Ptolemies, I argue, used the *mitra* headdress, suggestive of their connection to Dionysos and Herakles, despite conventional Greek perceptions that associated donning the *mitra* with effeminacy and barbarian *tryphe*.<sup>16</sup> By promoting the *mitra* as part of their royal and cultic representation, the Ptolemies reinforced their connection to the divine bloodline of Dionysos, Herakles and Alexander. As such, the *mitra* conveyed divine authority to Ptolemaic rulers. Establishing some type of connection to the divine is certainly of great import, when starting a new ruler-cult.<sup>17</sup>

Ptolemaic rulership integrated cult and politics. In accordance with the *Zeitgeist*, Ptolemaic worldview became increasingly syncretic demonstrating adaptability to the new socio-political environment.<sup>18</sup> Thus, the king became part of the state religion, transformed into an object of cult and his subjects became his worshippers.<sup>19</sup> Since Dynastic Egyptian times, the person of the pharaoh was equal to god: divine, yet subject to human weakness, sickness, ageing, even death. The pharaoh was the sole ritualist maintaining the essential cultic links between the gods and the people.<sup>20</sup> The priests were his proxies appointed by the pharaoh in order to carry out the rituals. In Dynastic Egypt gods gained country-wide importance thanks to the royal patronage of their cults. In Hellenistic Egypt royal patronage was granted to cults of Panhellenic popularity. While the native Egyptians simply cast the Ptolemies in the role of Egyptian pharaohs, as this was the only form of rule they were familiar with, the Ptolemies’ design seemed to be to make the idea of divine rulership more palpable to the Greeks. To this end religious cults that would appeal to both Egyptians and Greeks were embraced, established and sponsored, their visual vocabulary was carefully chosen. The ruler-cult sought assimilation to Greek gods which had potential to assimilate to respective Egyptian deities (e.g. Zeus–Amun, Aphrodite–Hathor). Hybrid deities combining elements of Greek and Egyptian gods were created (Serapis, Harpokrates) with the aim to promote religious syncretism.

8 E.g. Eur. *Hec.* 924; Ar. *Thesm.* 257, 941. The most prominent figures of the Alexandrian literary scene mention the female *mitra*-girdle in their poetic compositions in-keeping with Greek poetic traditions: Theoc. 27.55; Callim. fr. 75.45 Pf.; *Hymn* 1.21; *Hymn* 3.14; Ap. Rhod. 1.288; 3.156; 3.867; 3.1013; 4.1024; Mosch. Eur. 73, 164.

9 Pind. *Ol.* 9.84; *Isthm.* 5.62; Bacchyl. 13.159; Eur. *El.* 162.

10 Kurz and Boardman 1986, 50–56, figs. 11–28, esp. 29 (with images of *mitrai* drawn by the author); Llewelyn-Jones 2003, 26. On the difference between *mitra* and *sakkos* see Lee 2015, 72. On *mitra*, *sakkos* and *tainia* see Lee 2015, 158–159.

11 Alc. PMG 1.67; Ar. *Thesm.* 257.

12 LXX [Isaiah] 61:10; [Baruch] 5.2.2.

13 These items of clothing refer to the symbols of sovereignty for the reinstatement of Jerusalem, Henderson 2014, 249.

14 The terms *mitre/mitra* are still used nowadays to denote the headdress of the Pope as well as the headdress of the Orthodox Patriarch.

15 Brandenburg 1966 and Bezantakos 1987 offer diachronic surveys of the *mitra* focusing on archaeological and literary evidence respectively. Also Tölle-Kastenbein 1977; Knauer 1992; Fischer 2008; Pochmarski 1974; Stewart 1982.

16 See e.g. Picard 1932; Kerenyi 1996, 280 on Dionysos as *mitra*-bearer.

17 The Macedonian connection to Dionysos and Herakles had already been strong in Macedonia. On the worship of Dionysos in Macedonia see Goyette 2010, 2. On the cult of Herakles see Mari 2011, 455 n. 5 and 463. On the genealogy of Macedonian kings from the Argead house see Ogden 2011, 92–108. On the connection between Alexander and Dionysos see Nock 1928, 21–30.

18 On the “spirit of the times” leading to new “manufactured” religious cults see Pachis 2004.

19 Mikalson 2006, 215. Greek gods have been theorised as not being separable to Greek ritual, see Henricks 2010, 26.

20 Lloyd 1991; O’Connor and Silverman 1994.



By being pharaohs, the Lagid kings already had a cultic role in the eyes of their Egyptian subjects.<sup>21</sup> By being Macedonian kings, the Ptolemies promoted an image of kingship that did not only derive from royal descent or legitimacy, but also from the ability to command armies and rule effectively. The myth of Dionysos' and Herakles' victorious campaigns in India provided suitable models for this new kind of kingship, which relied on mastering a skill possessed by Alexander, *i.e.* to promote cultural integration in tandem with conducting a victorious military campaign.<sup>22</sup> In linking their bloodline to Alexander's, the Ptolemies defined themselves as gods and secured their right to inherit the empire. By Philadelphos' time, his father, Ptolemy the Saviour (Soter), the founder of the dynasty, had probably already been reinvented as the illegitimate offspring of Philip II, and a half-brother to Alexander, thus a descendant of Herakles.<sup>23</sup> Posthumous deification and self-proclamation to divine status by virtue of divine ancestry were also strategies adopted by the time of Ptolemy II.<sup>24</sup>

### The *mitra*, Herakles and the Ptolemies

No other Greek hero enjoyed the popularity of Herakles. Herakles, like Dionysos, was Panhellenic, but very widely worshipped in Macedonia, also due to his connection to hunting, the favourite pastime of Macedonian male youths.<sup>25</sup> Already in Philip II's time Herakles was represented on Macedonian coinage, but it was probably Alexander who linked the Macedonian royal bloodline straight back to Herakles and Dionysos. Herakles as a model of masculinity was very popular with Alexander's comrades. In a speech to the Macedonians reported by Arrian, Alexander had maintained that Dionysos, too, had performed labours.<sup>26</sup> Alexander's exploits had outstripped those of even the

most iconic figures of Greek cult and myth. In a speech to the Macedonians Anaxarchos indirectly suggested that Alexander deserved to be worshipped as much as Dionysos or Herakles, even more so because, unlike them, he had been born a Macedonian.<sup>27</sup> In his after-life in Lagid Alexandria, Alexander often combined the roles of Herakles and Dionysos. Ptolemaic propaganda was specifically launched to facilitate the dynasty's assimilation with these gods and through them with Alexander.<sup>28</sup>

The life-time coinage issues of Alexander depicted Herakles' head wearing the lion scalp on the obverse and Zeus on the reverse. In around 316/315 BCE Ptolemaic coinage depicted Alexander wearing an *aegis* covering his shoulders, like a *chlamys*, and a headband (*mitra*) on his forehead.<sup>29</sup> The reverse continued to bear the seated Zeus motif. The legend on the reverse on both series read either "Alexandrou" or "Alexandrou Basileos". A third series bearing the elephant-scalp portrait started in 312 BCE or shortly before. Coins in this series showed a redesigned elephant scalp, Ammon's horn, the *mitra* and the *aegis*. The reverse motif was changed to show a fighting Athena shielding a Ptolemaic eagle perched on a thunderbolt. The legends noted for this type were "Alexandrou", "Alexandreion" or "Alexandreion Ptolemaiou".<sup>30</sup>

The court poetry of Theokritos and Kallimachos, whose *floruit* (*i.e.* active poetic production) roughly coincides with the reign of Ptolemy II and the early years of Ptolemy III, celebrated Philadelphos' and Alexander's descent from gods, while offering poetic examples of their patron-king's assimilation to Greek gods.<sup>31</sup> Roughly half a century after Alexander's death Theokritos represented Ptolemy and Alexander as deified escorts of Herakles, to whom they both traced back their lineage.<sup>32</sup> Theokritos described them both as ageless stewards to Herakles: the one carrying Herakles' bow for him, the other his club. The absence of Dionysos from this scene had special significance: Theokritos gave Alexander the role of Herakles' drinking partner elsewhere played by Dionysos.<sup>33</sup> Alexander and the Ptolemies were rumoured to be drinkers and the drunken Herakles was also

21 The pharaohs were thought to be incarnations of the god Horus in life and Osiris in death. For a general overview of the royal kingship in Egypt see Morkot 2005.

22 Hartman 1965, Dionysos came to India before Alexander, conquered it, founded Greek cities, gave them laws, viticulture and agriculture. On Alexander's ancient historians mentioning Herakles' expedition to India see Tarn 2003, 51–60.

23 Collins 1997.

24 The Adulis decree (OGIS 54), which records the conquests of Ptolemy III during the third Syrian War (240 BCE), lists as his ancestors the Sibling Gods (Ptolemy II and Arsinoe II), the Saviour Gods (Ptolemy I and Berenice I), Herakles on his father's side and Dionysos on his mother's side. Both Herakles and Dionysos were sons of Zeus, hence by connecting their genealogical tree to these gods, the Ptolemies were also connected by blood to the most important Greek god.

25 For a general introduction to Macedonian cults see Hornblower *et al.* 2012 s.v. with relevant bibliography.

26 Arr. 5.26.5.

27 Arr. 4.10.6.

28 Asirvatham 2010, 102.

29 Dahmen 2007, 13.

30 Stewart 1993, 341 fig. 5A obverse of silver tetradrachm minted by Ptolemy I depicting Alexander with elephant scalp and corns and with *mitra*.

31 On the Ptolemies tracing their descent back to Herakles see Fraser 1972, I. 202–220; Koenen 1993, 44–46; Huttner 1997, 124–145.

32 Theocr. *id.* 17.17–33.

33 Hunter 2003, 115 with relevant bibliography.

depicted wearing the *mitra*.<sup>34</sup> Diodoros of Sicily referred to Dionysos as *mitra*-bearer (*mitrophoros*) in order to suggest that Dionysos wore the *mitra* as a precaution against hangover.<sup>35</sup> Dionysos, after all, was the god of excessive *oinoposia* (wine-drinking). Theokritos' *idyll* 24, – probably composed on the occasion of the *Basileia* festival of 285 BCE in order to celebrate the co-regency of Ptolemy I with his son Ptolemy II, – featured a young Herakles, while *idyll* 17, – probably composed after the death of Ptolemy I, when Ptolemy II was both the Macedonian *basileus* and pharaoh of Egypt, – portrayed a mature one. In *idyll* 17.19 Alexander is the fear-inspiring slayer of Persians donning a colourful *mitra* (*aiolomitras*), a god equal to Herakles.<sup>36</sup>

The *mitra* headdress was connected with the cult of Herakles on the island of Kos, birthplace of Philadelphos (born 309/308 BCE). In Theokritean and Kallimachean poetry the boundaries between hymns and *encomia* often become blurred. Kallimachos' *Hymn to Delos* (*Hymn* 4) is also an encomium to Ptolemy and to his native island.<sup>37</sup> In the poem Ptolemy II's birth on Kos is prophesied by Apollo, just before the god himself is born on Delos. In verses 165–170, which contain an *encomium* to Kos and a mention of Khalkiope, Ptolemy is described as a powerful Macedonian king: All nations will succumb to his royal power symbolised by the *mitra*. The name of Khalkiope evokes a not too heroic episode of Herakles' life and also connects the hero to the *mitra*. According to Plutarch, the priest of Herakles at Antimacheia, Kos, performed the ritual sacrifices dressed in women's clothes and wearing a *mitra* on his head to commemorate Herakles dressing in women's clothes in order to save himself, when outnumbered by his attackers.<sup>38</sup> Finally, Herakles marries Khalkiope in order to purge himself. The myth of Herakles and Khalkiope at Kos brings to mind Herakles' crossdressing, when the hero was a slave to the Lydian queen Omphale.<sup>39</sup> Whether a Hellenistic addition, or already known in classical times, this version

of the myth portrayed a feminised Herakles spinning wool and wearing a *mitra* head cloth covering his hair.

### The Ptolemies and the *mitra* of Dionysos (Figs 7.1–7.4)<sup>40</sup>

Alexander's wardrobe included both Greek and Persian items of clothing, thus arousing vivid debates among his Macedonian comrades. During his life-time Alexander had probably also worn the *mitra* headband, as he wore the Macedonian *kausia* as testified by Alexander's historians. They report that Alexander and the *Diadochoi* wore the Macedonian felt *kausia* with a headband under or around it.<sup>41</sup> Perhaps the first successor to appear in public wearing the *mitra* with the *kausia* was Demetrios the Besieger (*Poliorketes*).<sup>42</sup> The first representations of Alexander wearing the *mitra* of Dionysos were on coinage minted under Ptolemy I.<sup>43</sup> On coins from Ptolemy's years as satrap of Egypt Alexander is depicted donning the Dionysiac *mitra* on the forehead, below the hairline, along with the horns of Ammon and an *aegis*-like cloak (*chlamys*) round the neck.<sup>44</sup> Having known Alexander since childhood, Soter could have chosen depictions of him on his state's coinage drawn on personal memory.

In discussing the Dionysiac provenance of Alexander's *mitra*, Fredricksmeier infers that there existed a Hellenistic tradition according to which Alexander's diadem was the typical attribute of Dionysos and that the Ptolemies followed this tradition by adopting the *mitra* headdress.<sup>45</sup> Smith contends that although one cannot be certain whether or not this headdress was purposefully adapted from the headband of Dionysos, it still would have been familiar enough to resonate with this god's ornamentation.<sup>46</sup> Shortly after Alexander's death, Ptolemy's coins of Alexander depicted him with elephant scalp and ram's horns. According to Stewart the *mitra* was added around 314 BCE.<sup>47</sup> Ptolemy I first appears on the obverse of the first gold staters issued bearing his portrait with a headband below his hairline crowning his forehead and the *aegis* on his shoulders thereby emphasizing his association with Dionysos, Zeus and Athena soon after his self-proclamation as ruler of

34 An iconographic example of Herakles given to excessive drinking, while wearing the *mitra* round his head, e.g. a Hellenistic bronze statuette from the Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge, inv. no. GR.2.1864 depicting a drunken Herakles wearing a *mitra*, see Nicholls 1982.

35 Diod. Sic. 4.4.4.

36 Acosta-Hughes 2012, 248, 245–258.

37 On the connection between Ptolemy II, Herakles, the poet Theokritos and the island of Kos see Hunter 1996, 17 and 80.

38 Plut. *Quaest. Rom. et Graec.* 304.

39 This theme had a long history of reception by later poets, sculptors, painters, e.g. the 1537 painting entitled *Herkules bei Omphale* by Kranach depicting Omphale's maidens placing a white *mitra* head cloth on Herakles' head, while passing him a distaff dressed with wool. The hero is holding a spindle in his right hand, which he will use to spin the wool.

40 See Figs. 7.1–7.2.

41 Ehippos *FGrHist* 126 F5; Plut. *Ant.* 54.5.

42 This is suggested by Plutarch and Douris of Samos. Douris uses the verb σφίγγω (to chinch, to tighten) probably suggestive of a material more flexible than metal for the *mitra*. On the *kausia* see Ma 2013, 270, n. 15 with relevant bibliography.

43 Dahmen 2007, 42.

44 Zervos *Issue XIII*; Svoronos 33; SNG Cop. 14.

45 Fredricksmeier 1997.

46 Smith 1988, 38, 41, 44.

47 Stewart 1993, 238.



Figure 7.1. Silver tetradrachm of Ptolemy I, with the portrait of Alexander, Alexandria, 310–305 BC. 15.64 g. Harvard Art Museums/Arthur M. Sackler Museum, Purchase through the generosity of Celia and Walter Gilbert, Claude-Claire Grenier, and Marian H. Finney Fund, no. 2005.115.52.



Figure 7.2. Silver octodrachm of Ptolemy I, 300–283 BC. 28.34 g. Harvard Art Museums/Arthur M. Sackler Museum, Loan from the Trustees of the Arthur Stone Dewing Greek Numismatic Foundation, 1.1965.2739.

Egypt in 305/304 BCE.<sup>48</sup> These attributes taken from the cultic context of some of the more important Greek gods were now associated with the Macedonian royal house of Egypt. The reverse of these staters pictured Alexander in an elephant-drawn chariot, a scene familiar from the grand procession of the second Ptolemy, where a colossal statue of Alexander appeared in a chariot drawn by real elephants.<sup>49</sup>

The cult of Dionysos has received contradictory interpretations: it has been viewed as one of the cults uniting the *polis*<sup>50</sup> or as a cult conducive to violent behaviour and savagery, thus, contravening the code of ethics of the *polis*.<sup>51</sup> Dionysiac cult was inclusive and Panhellenic, not closely associated with any particular Greek *polis* or religious centre. Dionysos had many identities, which made

48 Lorber 2012, 212–213.

49 Kallixenos of Rhodes cited by Athenaios 5.202a = FGH 627 F2.

50 E.g. as in the Great Dionysia in Athens, see Wrinkler and Zeitlin 1990.

51 This view originated in Nietzsche's *Birth of tragedy* and was reprinted in Otto 1965; Girard 1977.



Figure 7.3. Fragment of a hollow terracotta figurine, mould made in two halves; only the head is preserved and the back is unmodelled. The subject is male with a rounded fleshy face and wears a mitra and grapes with a hm-hmt crown. Possibly Dionysos or a Ptolemaic ruler such as Ptolemy VIII as Dionysos. Nile silt clay. UC48018. Memphis (Egypt L–Q/Egypt), h. 7.5 cm, w. 4.4 cm, d. 3.8 cm. Courtesy of the Petrie Museum of Egyptian Archaeology, UCL



Figure 7.4. Hellenistic silver tetradrachm from Maroneia (Thrace), after 146 BC. Inv. no. 1962.98.31. 16.46 g. Accession year 1962. Harvard Art Museums/Arthur M. Sackler Museum, Bequest of David M. Robinson.

him a better candidate for assimilation and was, in fact, one of the gods whose image Hellenistic monarchs chose to appropriate most. One of the main reasons was that Dionysiac cult appealed to people from all social strata, both men and women.<sup>52</sup>

Dionysos' myth represents him as coming from another land (Lydia, Thrace or India) in order to introduce his cult to Greece.<sup>53</sup> The god's typical attire consisting of the *mitra*

52 Ogden 2007, 9–11.

53 Csapo 1997, 255, esp. n. 9.



headdress and the *krokotos* was normally thought of as effeminate.<sup>54</sup> In the *Bacchae*, Euripides' last work, staged for the first time in Macedonia, Dionysos insists that Pentheus dress up as woman with a *mitra* on his head, which Perseus casts off, as if to break free from Dionysiac bondage just before being dismembered by his own mother and the rest of the maenads. The connection between Egypt and Dionysos goes back to the times when, according to ancient Greek authors, Dionysiac rites and the festival of Dionysia were brought from Egypt by Melampous. Dionysos' cult was strong in the Northern Aegean area, Thrace and Macedonia. But the god's Indian campaign was not really known in Greek tradition before Alexander the Great.<sup>55</sup> It was after the foundation of Alexandria that Dionysos became more and more associated with Egypt by assimilating with Osiris, and with India by being projected as the triumphant conqueror who brought civilisation to this land.<sup>56</sup>

The *mitra* appears in posthumous iconography of Ptolemy I Soter linking him to Dionysos. A relief portrait of Ptolemy I in Hildesheim, manufactured posthumously, bears a remarkable similarity in the position of the head and neck to portraits of Alexander.<sup>57</sup> Ptolemy I is represented donning a *mitra* which associates him with the god and alludes to Dionysos' and Alexander's Indian campaigns. Beginning with Ptolemy II, the Ptolemaic dynasty was eager to invoke any connection to both Dionysos and Alexander.<sup>58</sup> Through the cult of Dionysos the Ptolemies forged a close link with Alexander. The cult of Dionysos became increasingly important as it could both be tied to Alexander and to his conquests in the East, which the Ptolemies aspired to assume control of. Dionysos' *mitra* alluded to his conquests in the East. Thus, the myth of *mitra*-bearing Dionysos, native of Nyssa in India, was exploited *a posteriori*.<sup>59</sup> According to the

Ptolemaic *interpretatio* Dionysiac myth seems to have been used as an implicit justification of the Ptolemies' hunger for war, booty, *tryphe*, and the launching of grand festivals to show off their spear-won *tryphe* and booty.<sup>60</sup>

The Ptolemies exerted total control over the images embellishing their coinage. The *mitra* depicted on Ptolemaic coins in conjunction to the portrait of the founder of the dynasty is a subtle, yet powerful visual expression of the political message the Ptolemies wished to circulate wherever these coins were used. The *mitra* appears in elaborate designs in silver and gold (circulating in and outside Egypt) and in a much more modest design in bronzes minted for circulation within Egypt. As Andrew Stewart aptly points out "this imagery soon turned out to be two-faced, promising as much to Ptolemy as to those whose hard-earned cash it embellished. So just as these coins assured the army of continued victory and loot, they also signalled to civilians that Egypt was the land of prosperity and profits."<sup>61</sup> Ptolemaic Egypt was thus suggested to be a land of opportunity, where even a god such as Dionysus, who despite being known in mainland Greece since the second millennium BCE, was often presented as a later addition to the Olympic pantheon, could flourish and lead victorious campaigns to far-away lands.

Although Dionysos may have been an influential model for Alexander, the importance of this god increased from Philadelphos on. This is demonstrated by the central position of the god in the great procession of Ptolemy II.<sup>62</sup> The festival was organised during the reign of the second Ptolemy to celebrate the deification of his deceased parents thus inaugurating the ruler-cult in Ptolemaic Egypt.<sup>63</sup> This perhaps echoes the *Alexandreia* festival which was held jointly with Dionysos' *Dionysia* on Rhodes and in Alexandria.<sup>64</sup> Another suggestion is that the festival was the Alexandrian *Dionysia* organised to hail Ptolemy as Neos Dionysos.<sup>65</sup> Probably Dionysos had not already assimilated with Osiris, since the description of the festival shows that it followed the Greek type and included a *pompe* (procession), *thysia* (sacrifice), *agon* (competition) and

54 Cf. Dionysos is referred to as *θηλυμίτρης*, "of the womanly mitra" (Lucian *Dial. D.* 18.1). The Chorus in Sophokles' *Oedipus Tyrannus* (OT 209) hails him as Dionysos "of the golden mitra".

55 Both Pliny the Elder (*HN* 6.21.4–5) and Arrian in *Indica*, the last book of his *Anabasis* (*Anab.* 8.9), mention Dionysos, not Alexander, as the first Greek who had been to India.

56 Hdt. 2.144, Diod. Sic 4.1.6 and Cic. (*Nat. D.* 3.21–23) identify Dionysos with Osiris. The far reaching similarities between these two gods had been noticed by ancient Greek authors, e.g. Plut. *De Is. et Os.* 35–36. Both gods are connected with life-producing moisture, fertility and resurrection.

57 Ashton 1999, 43 n. 2; Litwa 2012, 77 n. 54; for illustration see Fazzini and Bianchi 1988, 146, no. 51; Kyrieleis 1975, pl. 7, 3.

58 On the importance of Dionysiac cult in Ptolemaic Egypt see Tondriau 1950a.

59 Alexander probably reached Nyssa in 327/6 BCE, between three and four years before his death and four to five years after the foundation of Alexandria in Egypt. On Alexander's

connection to Dionysos and his Indian expedition see Tondriau 1950b, 212–213.

60 Diod. 4.4.4; Plin. *HN* 7.191; Stewart 1993, 237.

61 Stewart 1993, 241.

62 Ath. 5.197c–201b. See also Rice 1983.

63 Dunand (2002, 288) identifies it with the *Ptolemaia* and dates it before or after the first Syrian War (either between 275–275 BCE or 271–270 BCE).

64 Buraselis 2012, 254–255, 216. The date these festivals started are not sure.

65 Göde 2015, 342.



*hestiasis* (banquet).<sup>66</sup> The festival is quite fully described by Kallixenos of Rhodes, probably a close contemporary, but not an eye-witness. Kallixenos' account is reported by Athenaios.<sup>67</sup> While staged in honour of Ptolemy I Soter and his wife, it focused on Dionysos' Indian campaign. Ptolemy I was represented as a descendant of Dionysos. The god was accompanied in the procession by a personification of Nyssa and by Maenads and Bassarids, whose presence suggests that orgies (*orgia*) were also part of the cult. This pageant included a colossal statue of the god, followed by his victorious army of infantry and cavalry, which paraded armed and in military dress. The *mitra* is mentioned twice in Kallixenos' description.<sup>68</sup> The statues of Alexander and Ptolemy wore golden ivy crowns, perhaps evoking the fact that, when Alexander had conquered Nyssa, he saw a place where ivy and vines grew, a sign that Dionysos had already been there.<sup>69</sup>

In some of the portraits of Ptolemy III on coinage the *mitra* figures prominently as an allusion to both Dionysos and Alexander.<sup>70</sup> Two marble sculptures from Tell Timai (Thmuis), a large settlement site in the Delta founded in the Ptolemaic period, probably depict Ptolemaic rulers.<sup>71</sup> Only the heads and necks survive, and it is clear from the base of the pieces that they were slotted into statues that were most likely made from a different material. The male rulers can be identified as Ptolemy II and Ptolemy III. The head of Ptolemy III has a *mitra* across the forehead linking him to Dionysos.<sup>72</sup>

Ptolemaic kings who took the name "Neos Dionysos" most probably wore and were depicted wearing the Dionysiac *mitra*. Ptolemy IV Philopator had a close relation to Dionysos, established numerous festivals of the god and encouraged Dionysiac cult among the Jewish

community.<sup>73</sup> The latest appearance of the *mitra* in coinage is under Ptolemy V (205–180 BCE). Ptolemaic propaganda emphasised that Alexander had assumed the capacity of "Neos Dionysos" while he was alive.<sup>74</sup> This capacity was also assumed by Ptolemy Philopator, Ptolemy XII Auletes and Marc Anthony. When Ptolemy IV came in power, he started a religious reform merging the royal cult of his predecessors to the Dionysiac rites and was named Neos Dionysos.<sup>75</sup> Sculptural representations of cultic statues of the Ptolemies include a marble head from Louvre, attributed to Ptolemy XII which represents the ruler wearing a Dionysiac *mitra* across the forehead.<sup>76</sup>

### Partaking in the divine: the *mitra* of the royal kinsmen

The early Ptolemies sought an affiliation with an established deity in order to elevate their status to that of gods and by the time of the late Ptolemies this was also extended to the relatives of the Ptolemies by awarding the *mitra* to them as an emblem of the rank of *syngeneis* ("of the same genos") of the Lagid king. When, in the beginning of the 2nd century BCE formal ranks were introduced within the ruling circle of the Ptolemaic kings, new terminology arose: members of the elite were distinguished into the royal kinsmen (*basilikoi syngeneis*), first friends (*protoi philoi*), friends (*philoi*), chief-bodyguards (*archisomatophylakes*), bodyguards (*somatophylakes*).<sup>77</sup> According to Mooren,<sup>78</sup> the *strategoï* of the Thebaid bore the title of *syngeneis* after about 135 BCE. The striding draped male figures<sup>79</sup> depicted *strategoï* (i.e. governors of the *nomoi*-districts), bearing the title of *basilikoi syngeneis* (kinsmen of the king), the highest rank in court hierarchy.<sup>80</sup> Despite the fact that they held all the priestly titles of the temples of their *nomoi*, these were also civilian officials. All the inscriptions mentioning their titles were inscribed at the back of their statues, where only the gods would be able to see them.<sup>81</sup> They are dressed in *chiton* with a *mitra* encircling their heads.

A group of inscriptions on their funerary monuments in both Greek and Hieroglyphic scripts document the story of five generations of a family from Apollinopolis Magna

66 The Ptolemaic agenda of cultic innovation that had probably been started right after Soter had ascended the throne had still quite a few items on the list at the time of Ptolemy II, e.g. the big temple of Sarapis in Alexandria had not been completed until the time of Ptolemy III.

67 Both authors claim documentary sources for their figures: Appian, the so-called *basilikai anagraphai*; and Kallixenos, the *graphai penterides*, cited as available for further details of the grand procession in Ath. 197d.

68 Ath. 5.27.24, 5. 28.14. It is also mentioned a third time (5.28.28) to refer to *mitrai* tied around a *thyrsos* held by the statue of Nyssa.

69 Herakles came to India before Alexander and after Dionysos. On Herakles in India see the report of Arrian 8.8–9. On Dionysos' Indian exploits see Diod. Sic. 2.38. 3.63, 4.3; Arr. 8.5; cf. Strabo 11.5.5.

70 Queyrel 2002.

71 Boston, Museum of Fine Arts, inv. no. 01.8207–8208; Kyrieleis 1975, 44–46, 104, pls. 32, 89, nos. D.1, L.1.

72 Edgar 1915; Lloyd 2010, 975.

73 Hazzard 2000, 116.

74 Tarn 2003, 212.

75 P. Oxy. ii. 236

76 Louvre, inv. no. Ma 3449. For an image see Stanwick 2002, 234, photo no. 274–275. Walker and Higgs 2001, 157, no. 155.

77 Herman 2002, 38.

78 Mooren 1977, 85.

79 Bianchi 1976.

80 Strootman 2013, 1818.

81 Gorre 2013, 108 n. 42.

(Edfu). Four grave stelae to Ptolemaios, Aphrodisia, their son Apollonios and another Apollonios, probably the former's brother, from the cemetery of Edfu (late 2nd to early 1st century BCE) commemorated a locally important family with inscriptions in verse. All three men had fought in the Ptolemaic army and held titles at the Ptolemaic court. One of them, named Ptolemy, had shown courage in battle and was rewarded by the Euergetes with a *mitra* for the *syngeneis*, a headband for the kinsmen of the king:

He received the golden crown of courage (*mitra*) and he wore the royal *gtn* (*chiton*).<sup>82</sup> Though the Greek epigram is not explicit about Apollonios' military and administrative positions, the stele of Apollonios in Hieroglyphic Egyptian refers to him as "great chief of the army", "chief of the cavalry", and "first lieutenant of his majesty in the south". Apollonios appears to have held the position of *strategos*, a most important post in the Ptolemaic administration. He also held the court title of "brother of the king" and therefore would have worn the *mitra* as did Ptolemy.<sup>83</sup>

### Conclusion: Everything to do with Alexander

During the time of the early Ptolemies the *mitra* seemed to be the common thread connecting Dionysos, Herakles and Alexander. Alexander's connection to Herakles came to be less and less stressed than his connection to Dionysos. Dionysos' identity was renegotiated into that of a deity that could perform feats. Despite its close associations with femininity and barbarian finery, the *mitra* figured quite prominently in cultic manifestations and representations of the Ptolemaic ruler cult. As the traditional gods of the *polis* no longer fit the cultic needs of the Ptolemaic state to exercise their power over their multicultural subjects. Already bearing ideological connotation of *habrosyne* the *mitra* soon transformed into a symbol of Ptolemaic rulership and lifestyle. The Ptolemaic *mitra* headband represented divine and cosmic sovereignty, victory and luxury, the dynasty's link with Herakles, Dionysos, and most of all Alexander. The Ptolemies never missed an opportunity to connect themselves to Alexander the Great, who had also aspired both to being obeyed as ruler and worshipped as god. Tying their genealogy back to that of Alexander was crucial to Ptolemaic construction of authority. They used the *mitra* to achieve this goal also because Alexander was probably the first Macedonian to appear in public wearing it. The *mitra* in Ptolemaic public representations alluded to the charismatic military leadership of Dionysos,

of Alexander and by extension, also of the Ptolemies. In conjunction to its cultic significance, this headband was honorarily bestowed to selected members of local elites to denote kinship with the royal family, high rank at the dynastic court, and to allude to a military feat that they had performed.

The *mitra* was a stylistic choice of representation that was well-rooted in Greek tradition. Nevertheless the Greeks seemed to perceive it as more eastern than Greek and thus more appropriate to the eastern cultic context of Egypt. The *mitra* worn on the forehead below the hairline was not distant from the cultic representation of the Ptolemies as pharaohs donning the pharaonic headdresses that covered part of the forehead reaching just above the brows.

This paper has offered a greater understanding of how the *mitra* functioned in Ptolemaic Egypt in relation to Greek cultural myths and symbols. Addressing the pervasiveness and "translatability" of this headdress, and, tracing its impact on local Egyptians, who had their own cults and myths would undoubtedly produce a more synthetic view of religious cultic practices in Egypt under the Ptolemies.

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83 Moyer 2011, 32.

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## Astral symbols on a loom weight from Adjisyska Vodenitsa (ancient Pistiros), Thrace: Measurement, astronomy, and cult

*Zosia Halina Archibald*

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Stars, rosettes, and other shapes derived from human observations of heavenly bodies are not uncommon on fragments of ancient textiles, on representations of woven fabrics in other media, and occasionally in other materials. It is rare, however, to find an object that seems to belong to the world of textile manufacture, but that nevertheless alludes consciously and deliberately to astral ideas.

The “loom weight” that is the focus of my reflections in this paper is therefore rather an exceptional artefact. The object is a baked clay pyramid, resembling a loom weight in form, as well as having two holes pierced through it laterally, near the narrow, upper end. I say “resembles” a loom weight, because the artefact appears to have more than one possible function. Each side of the pyramid, as well as the square base, is decorated with symbols and signs, while the base shows a number of intersecting alphabetic letters, as well as signs. The archaeological context of this artefact has been documented in considerable detail, so it is possible to capture much of the immediate behavioural, as well as the physical environment in which it was deposited. This contextual information enhances and enriches the sort of interpretation that we can give to this object on the basis of its appearance, and of the symbols and letters that were carved into its faces.<sup>1</sup>

Analysis of the images or signs that the object displays indicates a conscious association between spatial measurement and celestial measurement, or between spatial measurement and astronomical ideas. At present, there is very little research in the context of which

the “loom weight” and its symbolic vocabulary can be understood. There is comparatively little written evidence from Classical Antiquity on which to draw for an understanding of the concepts that may lie behind the images. The hundreds, perhaps thousands of mounds and megalithic monuments documented from ancient Thrace over more than a century have sometimes been considered as markers of celestial time.<sup>2</sup> Solar and lunar signs were used on ceramic and metal artefacts at different times; but these survivals of a Thracian symbolic language (if that is, indeed, what we are looking at here) have not yet been integrated into a coherent body of ideas, comparable to Babylonian, Persian, or Greek astronomical and metaphysical concepts, and the role within them of time measurement. What follows is therefore a first attempt to make sense of the artefact itself and to explore some of its ramifications. I will argue that the spatial configuration of decorated altars at ancient Pistiros offers specific clues, which provide a link between private and public use of the same principles of mensuration. The connection between measurement and weaving is more speculative, but seems implicit in the archaeological data. I will try to explain how we can begin to make links between the practice of textile manufacture and the practices associated with measuring distances.

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<sup>1</sup> A full presentation of the data excavated by the British project team will be provided in Archibald, forthcoming, 2018.

<sup>2</sup> See Tsonev and Kolev 2013 for a recent scientific and technical review of the orientation of 110 megalithic monuments in Bulgaria, and a comparative discussion of the evidence provided by temple-like tombs of the 5th–3rd centuries BCE (this topic is discussed further below).



Figure 8.1. Septemvri Archaeological Museum, inv. 1.2933, Face A © Z.H. Archibald.



Figure 8.2. Septemvri Archaeological Museum, inv. 1.2933, Face B © Z.H. Archibald.

### The decorated “loom weight” from Pistiros

Let us begin with the “loom weight” itself.<sup>3</sup> It consists of a regular pyramid, made of comparatively well levigated clay, which has been well, but unevenly fired. The exterior surface generally has a greyish-brown colour, concealing a grey-brown core, which shows a redder baked matrix in places, with superficial traces of burning on three faces (A, B, and C). This latter process has slightly discoloured the original grey-brown firing.<sup>4</sup> Each of the long sides is decorated with patterns cut out of the clay while still leather-hard. **Side A** (Fig. 8.1) shows a large, pentangular star, positioned in the middle of the triangular surface, made up of three

intersecting triangles, with the base lines removed. The care with which this design has been executed is the first piece of evidence that shows a close link between measurement and astral symbolism. Each of the star’s points is the same size (has the same angles) as every other point. Three subsidiary stars, one at the top, above the pentangular star, and two on either side below it, have not been executed with the same concern for accuracy. The pentangular star may well have been moulded from another material, such as wood or stone, which allowed for the model to be made using compasses and checked with exact, symmetrical precision. This would explain why there seems to be an odd discrepancy between the exactitude of the pentangular star and the three adjacent ones.

**Side B** (Fig. 8.2) is engraved with a symmetrical design along the longitudinal axis, representing a thunderbolt. This consists of two adjacent engraved circles in the centre, from which issue pairs of out-swinging curved grooves, giving rise to triple, curvilinear, flaring prongs. In the lower corners on either side of the thunderbolt is a *kerykeion/caduceus*, with a prominent crescent superimposed on a circular form, or sphere, above a vertical staff. The two images are virtually identical. The emphasis of the designer on the symmetrical horns of the crescent, and the spherical object below it, is particularly striking.

Turning the pyramid over again to **Side C** (Fig. 8.3), we find a combination of geometric forms within a triangular field, outlined on all three sides by a deep groove. In the top corner of this triangle, just below one of the holes that pierce the pyramid, is a diagonal cross or star, made up of four rays or strokes, below which is a square, divided into eight equal, triangular quadrants, again outlined by deep grooves. The incuse square is a design that appears on some early coin types from the northern Aegean. It resembles

3 Archaeological Museum in the Name of Mieczysław Domaradzki, inv. no. 1.2933; discovered in 2010, grid square B21 (API no. 499); for the archaeological circumstances and the primary publication, see Archibald 2013c; Bouzek and Domaradzka 2013, 62, fig. 8.3, provide an additional drawing. See further below for different interpretations; Maximum dimensions: height. 5.8 cm; base diameter: 4.2 cm; weight: 111.63 g. Coordinates: E: 3551.483; N: 1156.795; 252.399 m. asl; context: [178]. This and contemporary deposits contain diagnostic material from the early 4th century BCE, no later than the first half of the 4th century, and more likely to belong to the first rather than the second quarter of the century. Nevertheless, since this material is residual, the date of the context is likely to belong to the second, rather than the first quarter of the 4th century BCE. The dimensions and weight have not been accurately recorded in other publications except Archibald 2013c.

4 The clay matrix corresponds to pottery of medium ware, as defined by inclusions: regular calcite or quartz inclusions (approximately 15%), mostly fine and well sorted; Munsell colours: 7.5R/5–2.5YR/6.



Figure 8.3. Septemvri Archaeological Museum, inv. no. 1.2933, Face C © Z.H. Archibald.



Figure 8.4.a. Septemvri Archaeological Museum, inv. no. 1.2933, Face D © Z.H. Archibald.

one of the Iron Age European and also Babylonian icons for the universe.<sup>5</sup>

The final vertical **Side D** (Fig. 8.4.a) shows a simplified version of a common east Balkan symbol for a woman, familiar from ceramic imagery since the Late Bronze Age, if not earlier.<sup>6</sup> The main field on this face is occupied by a large relief triangle, surrounded by a larger triangle, made by scooping a deep, flat channel out of the surrounding clay. Above the double triangle is a symmetrical pattern, resembling a simplified palmette, composed of two pairs of parallel curving elements, separated on either side by two



Figure 8.4.b. Septemvri Archaeological Museum, inv. no. 1.2933, inscribed base © Z.H. Archibald.

<sup>5</sup> Labat 1976 provides a wide-ranging conspectus of Near Eastern symbols with astronomical and cosmological associations. An early version of the square is represented by Labat's no. 484 (214–215), the Sumerian sign ZIKUM, which in Akkadian/Babylonian corresponds to the word *šamû* (sky, heaven) (this would be sign number 484 in Labat, which in my edition of the book is on 214–215). Later forms of this symbol undergo various changes. An alternative sign corresponding to the square is Labat's no. 13 (the Sumerian sign DINGIR (Labat's no. 13), corresponding to the word "god" (Akkadian/Babylonian: *ilu*), "heaven" (Akkadian/Babylonian: *šamû*), or for the god Anu (who was the god of heaven). It was also used as a determinative sign preceding divine names. There is also another sign represented by a square, namely LAGAB (Labat no. 483), which is close to the Sumerian sign NIGIN2, which meant "to confine", or "to enclose" (Akkadian/Babylonian: *lawû*). I am grateful to my colleague at Liverpool, Magnus Widell, for these references and explanations.

<sup>6</sup> See Bouzek and Domaradzka 2013, 62–63, for references, including metal ornaments from the grave of a "priestess" at Marvinci, FYROM (Bouzek and Domaradzka 2013, 63 fig. 8.4).

diagonal lines. The diagonal lines resemble upraised arms, while the curved waves equate to locks of hair or breasts. The head is often highly abbreviated on such images. It is unclear whether the horizontal line below this image, like the groove around the universal symbol on Face C, has significance in its own right.

The base of the pyramidal loom weight is covered with a design that reinforces the astral and at once divine symbolism of the vertical sider (Fig. 8.4.b). In the centre is a series of inscribed Greek letters that may include M (mu) (and or Σ-sigma), T (tau), and P (rho); it is far from certain however, how these letters should be read and extrapolated from. The letters on the base of the loom weight have been combined in such a way that they cannot all be read from a single direction, but require the viewer



to turn the object over, in order to see the proper order. Nevertheless, if the pyramid were to be turned one side at a time, this does not automatically yield an obvious word, and the number of possible vowels that could be understood within the word or words is uncertain. The genitive form of μήτηρ, μητερος, or μητρός, has been suggested,<sup>7</sup> but needs closer argumentation. A case could equally well be put for μέτρον (a measure, an object for measuring things: *LSJ* s.v. μέτρον, 1), which would make the object a practical, or functional one, rather than a votive artefact. Abbreviations of letter forms are not uncommon among graffiti from Pistiros.<sup>8</sup> The best models for the inscribed motif are some coins of the Odrysian kings, particularly Saratokos, Kotys I and Amatokos (I and II), which show a similar use of letter abbreviations to show the ruler's personal name on reverse faces. A rare trihemiobol of Saratokos, which apparently has the ruler's head on the obverse, shows the name ΣΑΡ-ΑΤ-ΟΚΟ on the reverse, from left to right, around a set of letters or symbols, that looks like M above a small Δ (= delta), but more likely represents the first letter of his name, Σ, with another abbreviation (ΣΑΡ?).<sup>9</sup>

An even more telling connection can be made with bronze issues of Amadokos (usually attributed to Amadokos II: c. 359–351 BCE),<sup>10</sup> and therefore to the middle decades of the 4th century BCE. These rather thick bronze coins

have, on the obverse, a double axe, which forms the *tau* in the ruler's name, arranged in retrograde fashion, from right to left: AMA-[T]-OKO. Above the image of the double axe is a *caduceus*, laid horizontally in the field. The relevance of the Amadokos issues becomes apparent when we look at the symbols surrounding the inscribed letters on the base of the “loom weight”. Below the inscribed letters there is a *caduceus*, similar to the ones carved either side of the thunderbolt on Face B, except that on the base the spherical sign, surmounted by horns (or symmetrical snakes?), appears at both ends of the staff. If we were to re-conceive the inscribed letters (with the supposed *rho* becoming an *omicron* beside the hasta of *tau*), then it is possible even to discern AMATOKOY in the combined abbreviations. Given the preference for letter abbreviations on regal coins, alongside various symbols that unite the imagery of leadership with that of divine power, the identification of the “loom weight” as an object with official status may now seem rather more convincing. It is worth emphasising that the form of the *caduceus*, on the coins of Amadokos, and on the “loom weight” from Pistiros alike, are very close in design, with a strong emphasis on the elaboration of the finial (whether this is meant to show horns, like a rising moon, or snakes, or a combination of these elements), and different from those representations of Hermes' wand that show simple, intertwined snakes. In addition to the inscribed letters, and the *caduceus*, there are other, equally compelling, subsidiary symbols or elements. Opposite the *caduceus* is a pair of concentric circles, forming a high relief band, enclosing a relief sphere, which might represent the sun. To either side is a pair of juxtaposed rods, each crowned with a sickle-like finial, not unlike the *lituus* of Roman augurs, priests responsible for determining sacred space, among other things.<sup>11</sup> No such measuring rods have so far been discovered in ancient Thrace, but the presence of such symbols does reinforce the connection already suggested between the measurement of physical space and the measurement of celestial space. Before we can fully analyse the purpose or function of the “loom weight”, the context of its recovery deserves to be considered.

### The location of the “loom weight” at Adjiyska Vodenitsa (identified with ancient Pistiros) in central Thrace

The decorated “loom weight” belongs to a wide range of fired ceramic artefacts, including loom weights, discovered in central Bulgaria at Adjiyska Vodenitsa

7 Archibald 2013, 168; Bouzek and Domaradzka 2013, 63.

8 See Domaradzka 2002, 217, no. 17 (fig. 9.2); 221 no. 31; 224, nos. 46, 49; 2007, 226, no. 14 (fig. 1.14); nos. 29, 37–40 (fig. 2).

9 Yourukova 1992, 225, nos. 33/1 (Sofia AIM inv. no. 3207), cf. 33/2 (Athens).

10 Yourukova 1992, 242, no. 64 (Sofia AIM inv. no. 2002: Amadokos II, obverse; *epi Kleandros* on reverse); Peter 1997, 134–135 (Amadokos, type 4 = Berlin 443/1909); see now Martinez *et al.*, Cat. No. 135a (ill.), with Olivier Picard's introduction, 172–173. Although two kings named Amadokos are known (Isokrates refers to “the Elder” Amadokos, usually assumed to have been father of the younger man of the same name (5.66), no coins can convincingly be associated with an elder Amadokos, only with a Medokos, who is otherwise attested as a ruler c. 400 BCE (Xen. *Anab.* 7.2.32–34; see Archibald 1998, 122–123; 134–135, 216–218, 222). It therefore seems that Medokos should be the older man also identified as Amadokos I. Nevertheless, it is uncertain how the surviving coin types inscribed Medokos and Amadokos should be apportioned between the two rulers. Least controversial, however, is the bronze type with multiple grape clusters on a vine stock within a dotted square, and usually accompanied by a magistrate's name, which can confidently be attributed to Amadokos II (c. 359–351 BCE). There is a related type of monogram on some of Skostokos' issues: Yourukova 1992, 117 with discussion. The Amadokos coin types follow certain features of coins from Maroneia, whose output has recently

been fundamentally reconstructed (see Psoma, Karadima, and Terzopoulou 2008, esp. 123–129).

11 Beard, North, and Price 1998, II, 205, with further references.



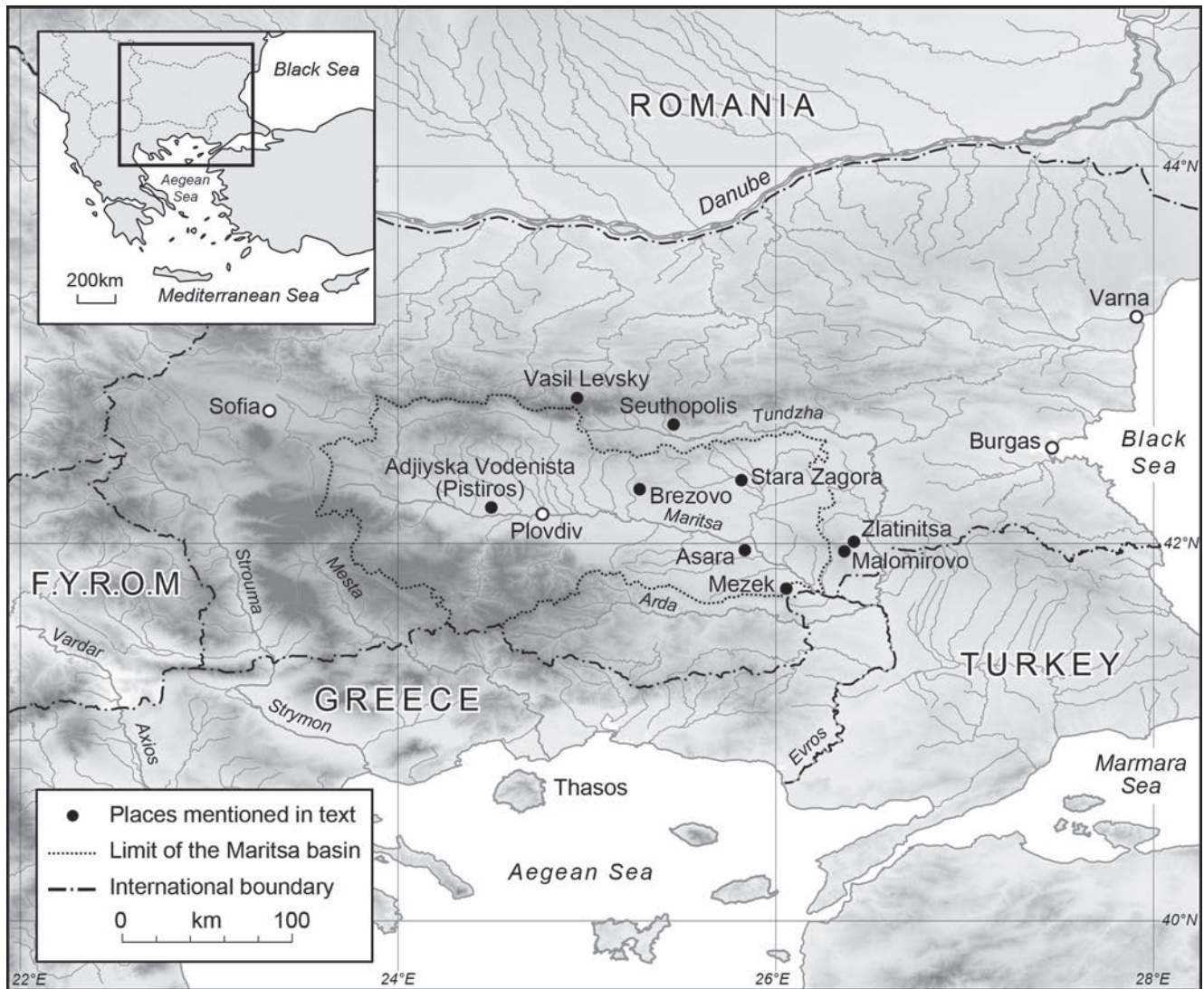


Figure 8.5. Map of ancient Thrace, showing Adjijyska Vodenitsa (ancient Pistiros) and important sites in the region, 5th and 4th centuries BCE © Z.H. Archibald.

(Hadji's mill), a modern rural locality where a mixed Thraco-Greek urban settlement of the 5th to 2nd century BCE has been excavated since 1988, several kilometres north of the town of Septemvri, which lies 68.9 km west of modern Plovdiv (ancient Philippopolis: Fig. 8.5). The modern town of Septemvri is a major railway junction between western Rhodope and the Thracian Plain. The principal Roman road between Byzantion and Serdica (Sofia), which follows an older route in the same direction, passed north of Adjijyska Vodenitsa, on the north bank of the River Maritsa (ancient Hebros). The discovery of an inscription, carved in Greek letters, on behalf of a local ruler and successor of Kotys I (perhaps Amadokos II), and naming Pistiros in a discussion about legal rights for visiting merchants from Thasos, Apollonia, and

Maroneia, provided the principal argument for identifying the excavated site as ancient Pistiros.<sup>12</sup>

Pistiros was evidently located to take advantage of an ancient network of roads and riverine routes that anticipated the modern ones.<sup>13</sup> Excavations at Adjijyska Vodenitsa have

12 SEG 43.486; SEG 46.872; \*SEG 47.1101; Chankowski and Domaradzka 1999, for discussion of the re-edited text, originally published by V. Velkov and L. Domaradzka in 1994; see also Archibald 2002b; Archibald 2016, 52–59, for further discussion of the relationship between the site and the content of the inscription; for an alternative view, see Chankowski 2010.

13 Archibald 1998, 38–39, for Early Iron Age evidence; Archibald 2002b, 258–260; Archibald 2002c, 314; Archibald

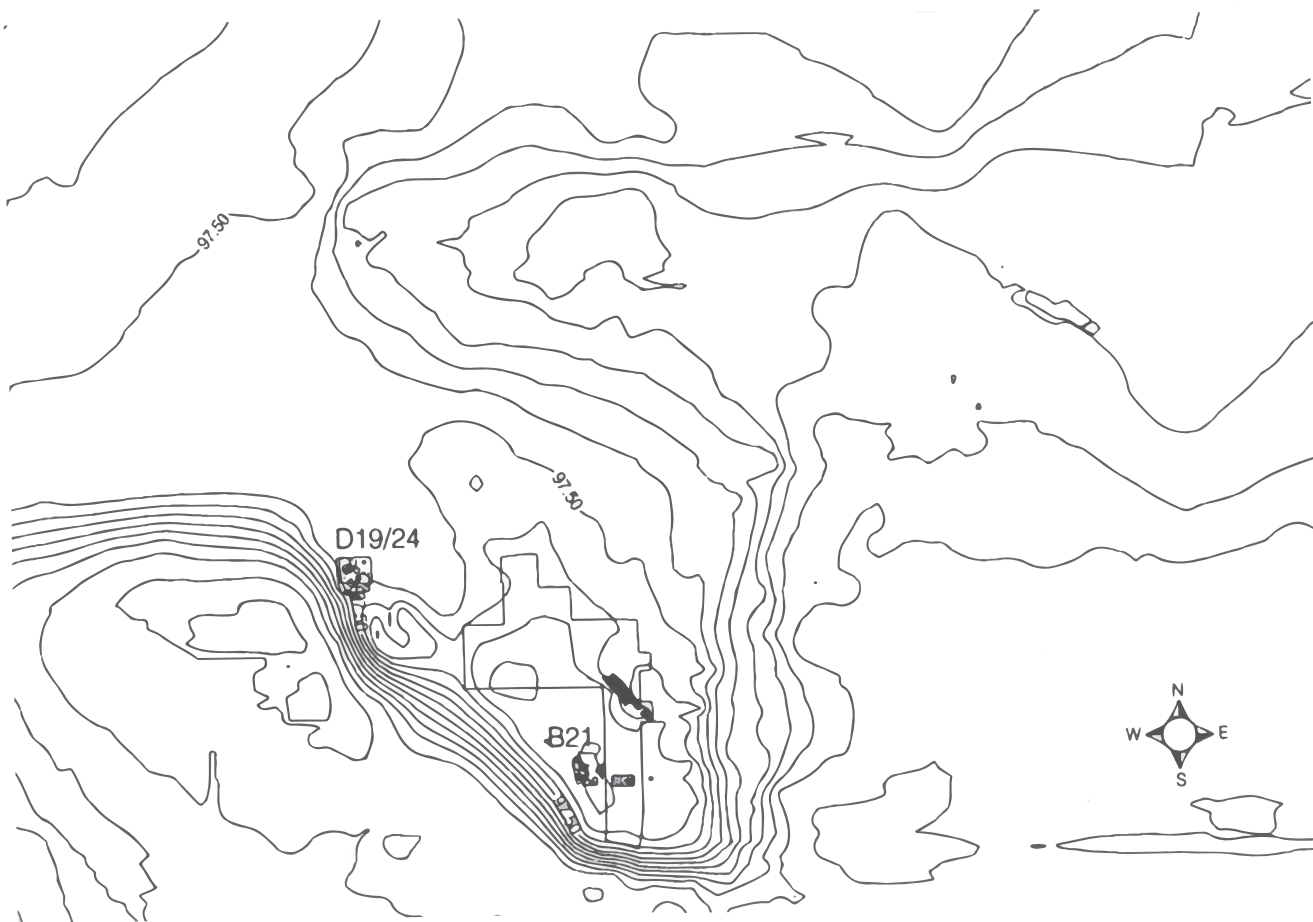


Figure 8.6. Plan of Adjyska Vodenitsa (ancient Pistiros), showing the British trenches © Z.H. Archibald.

yielded a rich haul of artefacts, including loom weights, spindle whorls, and other items that may be associated with textile manufacture. At present the loom weights from Adjyska Vodenitsa form the largest concentration of textile-related items found to date in Thrace south of the Danube. 859 were logged by May 2014.<sup>14</sup> They represent a

wide range of forms, with approximately 40% of pyramidal shape, 40% are pear-shaped, and 17% lenticular (with 3% of other shapes). 207 loom weights and 28 spindle whorls were published by Jan Bouzek in 1996 and a further 57 loom weights and 8 spindle whorls were added by Anna Matys in 2013.<sup>15</sup> The published material comes from 17 grid squares, each of which measures 10 m × 10 m. In other words, the 264 published loom weights and 36 spindle whorls represent an excavated area of 1,700 sq m, or 0.17 ha, less than half of the total number of squares wholly or partly excavated to date (Fig. 8.6).<sup>16</sup> The majority of the loom weights have

2013a, 223–237; and for coin distributions in the same region: Delev and Popov 2005. Madzarov 2009, 76 fig. 46 and 86–87 gives a description of the locations that can be identified with the road stations Soneium, Pons Ucasii, and Bona Mansio/Lissae; Madzarov 2009, 67–131 for a fundamental account of the Roman road network in Mount Rhodope. On 256–324 the author discusses the relationship between Roman and pre-Roman itineraries across western, central, and eastern Rhodope.

14 I am grateful to Valentina Taneva, Director of the Museum in the Name of Mieczysław Domaradzki, and to Bela Dimova for this figure, and for the statistical information about unpublished data on loom weights from this site, other than material from my own excavations. Bela Dimova (PhD student, University of Cambridge), will shortly complete a doctoral thesis that

comprises analyses of the textile equipment from Adjyska Vodenitsa, Koprivlen, and Seuthopolis, in ancient Thrace.

15 Bouzek 1996; Matys 2013; the two reports are preliminary accounts of some of the textile-related material excavated to date at Adjyska Vodenitsa.

16 The loom weights and spindle whorls were excavated in the following grid squares: A1, A4, A5, A18, A19, A20, B'3, B6, B7, B12, B21, B23, B24, Ж5, E22, E24, E25; the total number of grid squares investigated amounts to c. 0.56 ha.





Figure 8.7. View of trench B21, Adjiyska Vodenitsa; the “loom weight” was discovered in the centre of the section at the far side, facing the viewer © Z.H. Archibald.

been excavated as single finds, or in small groups, although most weights found in close proximity are of different forms.

The variability in numbers of loom weights (and other artefacts) across the excavated parts of Adjiyska Vodenitsa has stimulated considerable discussion amongst researchers working there. Mieczysław Domaradzki, who first discovered the site at Adjiyska Vodenitsa, thought that the numbers of artefacts discovered in the grid squares south of the “bastion” were much more numerous than those found west of the main east–west road. For example, pottery finds in square A6 (containing several “altars”), look to be about a third, or even a quarter of those in B’2.<sup>17</sup> He therefore argued that the squares south of the bastion should be associated with open places where votives were deposited.<sup>18</sup> Much

more work needs to be done on the finds statistics to test his hypothesis about numbers of finds. Nevertheless, his assumption that these parts of the site were mainly open areas probably needs to be nuanced, as does the suggestion that many artefacts should be considered as votives. At the time, he was writing his reports, Domaradzki was unaware that so many more examples of “altars” would turn up in other parts of the site, and in rooms that were manifestly covered by clay plaster ceilings and terracotta roof tiles.

The loom weights published in 1996 were derived from the trenches excavated by Mieczysław Domaradzki in the grid squares close to the fortification wall and in those immediately south of the “bastion”. The second study looks at a selection of material discovered in the Czech trenches and in some other areas. Besides these items there is a range of unpublished evidence. Within the two areas investigated by the British team (Fig. 8.7), 52 loom weights were recovered from grid square B21, and 24 from the partial squares J19 and J24, which are located on the

17 Domaradzki 2002, 18 and Statistical Table (gross numbers of sherds).

18 Domaradzki 2002, 18–19.

far western end of the bluff on which the settlement is positioned. Modern destruction of these westernmost parts of the remaining archaeological site, combined with erosion of this area since Classical Antiquity readily explains the numerical discrepancy between the two British excavation zones. We are therefore entitled to accept that the statistics for the two areas are broadly similar for the volume of soil excavated from each. (B21 corresponds to a full  $10\text{ m} \times 10\text{ m}$  grid square, while D24/25 represents approximately  $5\text{ m} \times 10\text{ m}$ ). The location of these two trenches was originally selected as being in both cases at some distance from the main east–west road, and therefore more likely to be representative of areas that were less closely associated with the commercial or administrative functions identified either side of the road.<sup>19</sup>

In many respects this rationale has indeed proved itself. The data from D24/25, both in terms of spatial features (including floors with low altars; traces of internal architectural remains, such as coloured wall plaster, and fired clay brick or packing), and in terms of movable finds – ceramic, metal, and faunal – suggests that this trench occupies a sub-set of what was, from the early 4th century BCE onwards, if not earlier, until the advanced 3rd century BCE, a residential unit.<sup>20</sup> The great value of the evidence from this trench lies in the deep stratigraphy that has been preserved here, rather than spatial data. Neither has the perimeter of the unit, nor the external walls, been located. In part this may be due to a combination of factors, including the extent of modern destruction in this part of the site, which has removed layers immediately to the north and east of this trench; and to the proximity of the eroded, western flank of the bluff, which the River Maritsa has gradually encroached upon at various times in the last two thousand years, breaking off archaeological deposits as it cut new courses.<sup>21</sup> As a result, the traces of domestic activity are scattered in several rooms (of an incompletely preserved house). At least, there is no reason to question that it is domestic. The pottery and animal bones, found mainly in the make-up of successive floors, point to areas where food was prepared and consumed, in close proximity to women's activities, represented by toilet articles, dress ornaments, and loom weights, of different forms. These activities circulated around a low, square “altar”, whose exact location varied from one house reconstruction to another, but the orientation of the “altar” seems to have remained the same. These “altars” had equal sides, with the four corners facing the four compass points – north, south, east, and west. The preserved edges of one example in this trench show that the orientation of these features is exactly the same across

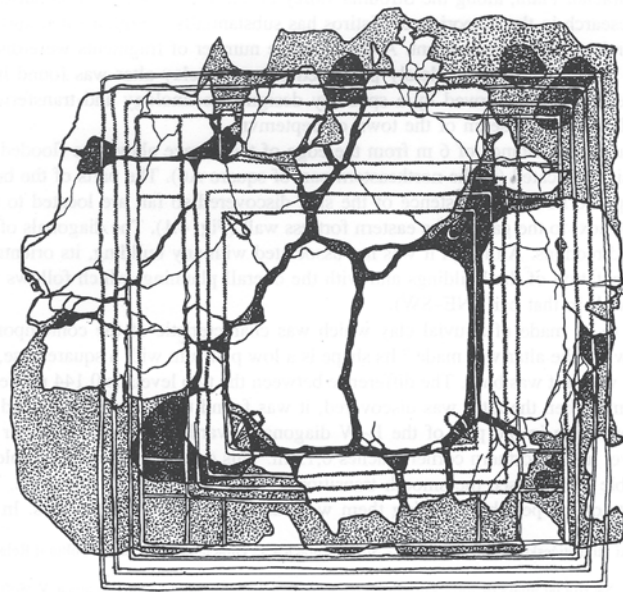


Figure 8.8. “Altar” from Adjyska Vodenitsa, grid square A6 © Z.H. Archibald.

the whole excavated space of Adjyska Vodenitsa. Similar “altars” have been found *in situ*, with the corners preserved, in grid squares A6, B’7, and B23, that is, west and south of the main east–west road, showing that these features were important orientating devices with respect to spatial organisation across the whole site (Fig. 8.8).<sup>22</sup>

The interpretation of trench B21 has been slightly more complicated. It is located behind the multi-roomed structures that flanked the main east–west road. The grid squares immediately to the east of it were explored in the early years of Mieczysław Domaradzki’s excavations south of the “bastion” (on the inner, southern flank of the fortification wall). These squares contained stone drains, wells, fired clay features of different kinds, and little evidence, other than what may be external ditches, of larger constructions that might correspond to buildings.<sup>23</sup> Trench B21 extends west of this rather complex area. The challenge for archaeologists has been to try and understand whether there were clay structures located here, which were simply hard to identify in dry excavation conditions, or whether these were largely open areas. The question is important, because the square

19 Domaradzki 1996; Archibald 2013b.

20 Archibald 2007; Archibald 2013d; Stallibrass 2013.

21 Chiverrell and Archibald 2009.

22 In trench D24/25, none of the surviving fired clay bases, which supported these “altar”-like structures, was completely preserved; but the edges of one surface were sufficiently identifiable in its western half to show that the orientation follows the same pattern as in other grid squares (see e.g. Lazov 1996; Domaradzki 2002, 23, 28 and fig. 1.12; Gotzev 2013).

23 Domaradzki 1996; Domaradzki 2002, 18–24.



“altars” that seem to have formed such an important feature of the residential units identified, not just in trench D24/25, but also squares A1, A7, and A8, cannot have been exposed to external weather conditions. The “altars” constituted large clay slabs, with decorated surfaces, which were fired *in situ*, to preserve the outer sides; but the clay surface, usually decorated with impressed or incised ornament, was never weathered, as would quickly happen if these features had been placed in the open. It is much more likely that they were always in a covered area. The presence of a number of such “altars” in the northern half of trench B21, and traces of at least another one in the south-western quadrant of the same trench, implies that much of the space exposed by successive excavation seasons belonged to a series of rooms. One of these “altars” was located in the north-west quadrant, close to the western (east-facing) section, in which a fragment is still *in situ* (Fig. 8.8). The base of another was located in the middle of the north-east quadrant of the same trench. The movable finds, which include ceramics and animal bones, point to domestic-type activities and consumption patterns.<sup>24</sup> Traces of accidentally fired construction materials, including numerous fragments of burnt clay, some with impressions from stakes and planks of wood, as well as coloured plaster, clearly point to organic structures.

The absence of identifiable stone footings has been one of the factors that have made researchers doubtful about the types of construction in the areas north and south of the main street at Adjijyska Vodenitsa. If we take into account the fact that the street-side buildings were constructed using similar materials to those deployed in the road surface (dressed ashlar blocks; river stones), and that these buildings incorporated walkways, shaded by porticoes, it is easier to see that a much greater investment was evidently made in the structures adjacent to the street, while beyond them such durable materials were not so important. Further away from the main road, river stones were used for walls, within a base course of clay and organic materials (perhaps cattle dung, which is still used in the region to this day), packed with clay and stakes, which were covered in thick, packed clay and plaster. Every few decades, the walls needed to be rebuilt. They were simply taken down and reconstructed over the collapsed remains of former rooms, creating a dense stratigraphy. It is this dense layering of building materials, belonging to structures that were comparatively ephemeral that has preserved so many artefacts and animal bones.

The “loom weight” was discovered in the north-west quadrant of grid square B21, close to the “altar” that is partially preserved in the trench section, as illustrated in Figure 8.7. Its decoration is unique at Adjijyska Vodenitsa.

Although a small number of loom weights have incised or stamped details, usually on the vertical sides of pyramidal weights (including some with gem imprints),<sup>25</sup> the majority are unmarked. The taphonomic processes just described, within residential units, also explain why loom weights and other artefacts appear to be coherent, in terms of groupings, or accumulations, but were not found *in situ*. In the case of our “loom weight”, the proximity of the fragmentary “altar”, and of a series of depressions containing storage vessels, of which large, unabraded fragments were preserved, suggests that there was perhaps less disturbance within this particular room at the time of its collapse and the filling in of the floor area with clay and other artefacts. We cannot be certain, however, exactly which other finds in the immediate vicinity were functionally associated with the “loom weight”. In order to refine our interpretation of this artefact, we must return to the matter of its probable function.

### Not a loom weight, but a *gnōma/groma*

If it was not used for warp threads on a loom, what else may this object have been used for? The likeliest explanation is that it was an ancient plumb bob, used for measuring distances. If it were suspended from a thread or wire, it could have served either as a single vertical indicator (*gnōma/gnōmōn*: γνῶμα/γνώμων), or, more likely, as one of a set, well known in the Roman *groma*, as parts of a sighting device. Our artefact could also have been used in conjunction with a horizontal indicator, or rule, showing distance points. The decoration on the sides and base of our artefact provides added confirmation of this purpose. The stars clearly imply that they played a role in the object’s function. A direct analogy for our artefact is an Egyptian bronze rod, of quadrangular section, made c. 600 BCE, from which hangs a small, bronze plumb bob, shaped like a small vase or tapering bud, and attached to a bronze wire by a ring-shaped loop.<sup>26</sup> The horizontal metal rod has holes at either end of its base, which imply that it would originally have been mounted on a pair of cylindrical poles. The Egyptian instrument is a useful analogy for a number of reasons. It preserves the connection between a measuring device and the plumb bob. The “measuring device”, or *merkhet*, is an Egyptian example of a precision tool used both as a surveying device, and as a tool for observing the transit

24 Archibald 2007, 88–94; Archibald 2013, 75–78; Stallibrass 2013, 278–279; M. Grzybalska, *Dietary habits in domestic contexts: a case study at Adjijyska Vodenitsa*, unpublished PhD dissertation, University of Liverpool, 2013.

25 Ondrejová 2007; Matys 2013, 173; AMS I.1454; I. 2023; I. 2030; I.2237; I. 2899; NSF575.

26 Lippincott *et al.* 1999, 101; Cat. 088: London, the Science Museum, inv. no. 1929.585. Lewis 2001, 15, is doubtful whether the *merkhet* can have been as efficient, as an instrument of measurement, as other scholars propose, but he has not commented on these artefacts in detail, as the contributors to Lippincott 1999 have done.

of certain stars. This example bears the sculpted head of the falcon-headed sun god at the opposite end of the rod from that from which the plumb bob is suspended. A hieroglyphic inscription relates that the instrument was the property of Bes, son of Khonsirdis, a priest, and Observer of the Hours at the Temple of Horus at Edfu, in Upper Egypt. The instrument was therefore used to make precise observations of stars at night. During the day, shadows were the standard tools used for measuring time before the development of mechanical timepieces, with a vertical pointer, a *gnōmōn*, casting the shadow that constituted the dynamic component of a sun dial. Simple spatial measurements from west to east could also be made during the day, using shadows and the sun's position for orientation. Finding north, however (and, by analogy, south), was more difficult. It could be done by measuring the angles of a circle around the sun's shadow.<sup>27</sup> It was probably easier to find the precise location of north at night, using the position of certain stars. Shepherds have traditionally used a kind of ready-reckoner, based on the memorised configuration of the Great Bear, in relation to the Pole Star, to tell the time at night. A woodcut from the *Kalendrier des Bergers*, c. CE 1500, shows a shepherd using two ropes, attached to a horizontal wooden pole, suspended at eye level, to check the position of this constellation.<sup>28</sup>

The Great Bear, also known as the Plough, was one commonly used constellation; the other was the Little Bear (*Ursa Minor*). Both of these constellations appeared to move slowly around the Pole Star during the course of the night. In antiquity the actual (and perceived) process would have been somewhat different from what we see in the sky today, insofar as the Pole Star was not the star located closest to the North Pole c. 400 BCE. There was a pattern of stars that surrounded the position where the Pole Star would later be, composed of what we recognise as the constellation of *Ursa Minor*.<sup>29</sup> Today the Pole Star forms the end of the Dog's tail in the group *Ursa Minor*, while Kochab and Pherkad are the brighter stars that mark the most distant components of the constellation. The polar axis would have been located at the intersection of the stars in this constellation, rather than close to any one star. In the 5th and 4th centuries BCE, observation of star positions had advanced well beyond the straightforward task of documenting when known stars could be viewed

on the horizon, in other words, when a known star "rose" above the horizon or "set" below it. Various kinds of star calendars, or *parapegmata*, were being compiled by astronomers.<sup>30</sup> Those who observed the stars in a regular and systematic way were also becoming interested in when a particular star attained the highest point in its passage along a north-south line. Egyptian instruments that combine a sighting device (which could be used for distance measurements), with a linear scale (which could be used to locate a star's position and recorded as such) show that the information about the position of stars at night could then be used to measure spatial points of known cardinal direction on the ground.<sup>31</sup>

The degree of accuracy in the measurement of distances that surviving ancient building remains demonstrate is remarkable. This is usually thought to have been achieved by multiplying the number of separate measurements made with a levelling device.<sup>32</sup> The use of several different back- and fore-sights to confirm a position, when combined with basic trigonometry, and tapes of known lengths, will deliver a high degree of accuracy. I have already noted the importance of the cardinal points, around which the "altars" of Pistiros were orientated. The numerous reconstructions of the "altars" discovered at Adjyska Vodenitsa implies that these features operated as independent spatial devices, whose sides provided parameters for the positioning of walls or other features. If we leave aside the buildings immediately adjacent to the paved main road, the walls of other structures, made of less durable materials, were built around the "altars", rather than these features being added later. Advances in arithmetical and geometrical precision in Thrace can be gauged by looking at the data drawn from recent studies of dolmens and built masonry tombs. The Early Iron Age dolmens show a wide variety of orientations, which suggest an equally broad range of priorities, or astronomical preoccupations. The built tombs of the 5th and 4th centuries BCE, however, betray a more consistent focus, not just on the position of the sun at the equinoxes (rather than solstices), but also on the position of the sun at its zenith during the day.<sup>33</sup> This confirms the idea that in Thrace, as in Greece, the altitude of the sun played a key part in measuring latitude, and that astronomical measurements were relevant to the organisation of the built environment, whether in commemoration of the dead, or on behalf of the living.

27 Lewis 2001, 25–30 (early Greek surveying techniques); 31–44 (Hellenistic improvements, using more sophisticated instruments, including more complex geometry and indirect sighting devices).

28 Vincent and Chandler 1969, 376, fig. 6 (New York Public Library); on "farmers" or "shepherds" star almanacs, see further Aveni 2008, 93–110.

29 Hannah 2009, 18.

30 Hannah 2009, 50–59.

31 Lippincott *et al.* 1999, 100–101.

32 Stiros 2012, for a detailed discussion of the techniques.

33 Tsonev and Kolev 2013, 23.

### Weaving and measuring – from threads to lines

The decorated “loom weight” from Adjyska Vodenitsa belongs to a form and has dimensions similar to a series of loom weights at this site, which were associated with the production of relatively fine fabrics. The manufacture of such textiles is given occasional prominence in ancient literary sources, including Thucydides’ description of the revenues of the Odrysian kings (Thuc.2.97.3), where the historian draws attention to the quality of the textiles that formed a significant part of the income derived from non-metal sources.<sup>34</sup> A number of surviving textile fragments from 4th century BCE tombs in Thrace has recently been displayed in an exhibition in Paris, where samples were subjected to microscopic analysis. The extraordinary techniques used to make these fragments, which include combinations of fibres (linen, with wool, and perhaps silk), as well as a range of dyes, gold thread and tiny gold tubes, wound around the textile fibres, testify to the sort of quality to which Thucydides was referring.<sup>35</sup> The “loom weight” seems therefore to belong to a phase, and a regional culture, in which precision technology in a range of crafts was valued and encouraged by political elites.

The act of weaving seems to have become embedded in early Indo-European cultural narratives as a metaphor for cosmic phenomena, including the passage of day and night, of the sun and planets.<sup>36</sup> Although the mythical legacy of Greek literature makes connections between weaving and time<sup>37</sup> – the vocabulary of weaving even incorporates the notion of time, through the close similarity of the word *καῖρός* (time, opportunity), with *καῖρος* (the shed rod or the shed bar), it is the connection between weaving and measuring that deserves attention. The metaphor of weaving was not just applied to broad metaphysical concepts; it was linked to a range of other specialist activities, including joinery.<sup>38</sup> For most people in antiquity, the loom was the chief precision instrument that they would have been familiar with. Builder’s tools, measuring rods, and levelling instruments, were the preserve of specialists, then as now. The loom, on the other hand, was deeply familiar, yet required great precision in its operation; far

more, in fact, than was required for any other household activity. Each thread had to be counted and weighted. Each movement of the shuttle had to be precise; otherwise mistakes would quickly become obvious to the viewer. The patterns of the earliest surviving woven textiles are often neat, regular, geometrical designs, which rely on careful calculations and periodicities. Textiles were the readiest models of mathematical regularities.<sup>39</sup> Perhaps the expertise of weavers in precise measurement explains why the artefact that is the subject of this paper should look so like a loom weight.

### Abbreviations

|                    |                                                                                                                                                                                            |
|--------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| LSJ                | Liddell, H.G., Scott, R. and Jones, H.S. 1968 <i>A Greek-English Lexicon</i> .                                                                                                             |
| Pistiros I         | J. Bouzek, M. Domaradzki and Z.H. Archibald, (eds.), <i>Pistiros I: Excavations and Studies</i> , 1996.                                                                                    |
| Pistiros II        | J. Bouzek, L. Domaradzka and Z.H. Archibald (eds.), <i>Pistiros II: Excavations and Studies</i> , 2002.                                                                                    |
| Pistiros III       | J. Bouzek, L. Domaradzka and Z.H. Archibald, (eds.), <i>Pistiros III: Excavations and Studies</i> , 2007.                                                                                  |
| Pistiros V         | J. Bouzek, L. Domaradzka, A. Gotsev and Z.H. Archibald, (eds.), <i>Pistiros V: Excavations and Studies</i> , 2013.                                                                         |
| Pistiros et Thasos | [M. Domaradzki], L. Domaradzka, J. Bouzek, J. Rostropowicz, (eds.), <i>Pistiros et Thasos: structures économiques dans la péninsule balkanique dans le Ier millénaire av. J.C.</i> , 2000. |

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34 Archibald 2013a, 162, with discussion.

35 Martinez *et al.* 2015, Cat. No. 49 (Zlatinitza-Malomirovo, 2005: silk?, linen, and wool, the putative silken threads dyed purple); *cf.* also Cat. Nos. 85 (Golyama Kosmatka tumulus, final quarter of the 4th century BCE: tapestry made of hemp, linen(?), and tiny gold tubes); no. 226 (Golyama Sveshtarska Mogila, end of the 4th to the beginning of the 3rd century BCE: gold tapestry).

36 West 2007, 372–373; *cf.* also Rappenglück 2003.

37 See *e.g.* Harlizius-Klück and Hülsenbeck 2002.

38 West 2007, 373.

39 This topic has been explored by Ellen Harlizius-Klück (2004) in the context of Classical antiquity. The anthropologist Gary Urton (1997) has explored the role of counting in weaving (and the different learning contexts of numeracy) among the Quechua of the Andes. His study suggests that there is a strong cultural correlation between social activities and the ways in which numbers are utilised.

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## Part II

### Italy





## Building V and ritual textile production at Timpone della Motta

*Sine Grove Saxkjær, Jan Kindberg Jacobsen and Gloria Paola Mittica*

At Timpone della Motta, the first textile implements came to light during the excavations conducted by the Groningen Institute of Archaeology<sup>1</sup> more than 20 years ago. Since then, the vast numbers of textile-related tools unearthed in relation to the so-called Building Vb, dating from the 8th century BCE, have attracted the attention of various scholars.<sup>2</sup> Within the framework of these existing works on the subject, the aim of the present article is to analyse the implements within the overall material corpus of Building Vb and to evaluate the evidence of a possible textile production in connection with the subsequent building phases, Buildings Vc and Vd, which cover the time-span from the late 8th to the late 7th century BCE. In this regard, the article will seek to outline distinctions between actual textile production and ritual dedications of implements, as well as focusing on objects displaying iconographic evidence related to the sphere of ritual textile production.<sup>3</sup> In addition, the article will evaluate the nature

of Building Vb, as well as attempting a reassessment of the origin of the associated ritual textile production, which is among the earliest known examples from Southern Italy.

The settlement of Timpone della Motta was established on a low hill with several plateaux, some artificially terraced, stretching along the left bank of the Raganello River. The hill itself rises about 280 m above sea level. The earliest traces of human activities date back to the late Middle Bronze Age, whereas the main period of activity at the site dates from the 8th until the 6th century BCE.<sup>4</sup> In antiquity, the settlement occupied several of the plateaux: the sanctuary was situated on the upper plateau, the settlement areas on Plateaux I, II and III, and, lastly, the Macchiabate necropolis was situated on a lower river terrace (Fig. 9.1).<sup>5</sup>

The sanctuary contains at least six building structures; the sixth structure was recently unearthed and the material is currently being processed.<sup>6</sup> The structures are named Building I–VI in accordance with their excavation sequence (Fig. 9.2). Several of the structures show signs of various building phases, but, unfortunately, a detailed stratigraphy is lacking in most areas of the sanctuary. This is due to a different tradition of excavation in the past combined with a very limited layer of topsoil in some areas of the sanctuary. What is more, the sanctuary has been exposed to a series of illegal excavations, especially during the 1970s,<sup>7</sup> which

1 Hereafter referred to as GIA.

2 In selection: Kleibrink 1993; 2003; 2005; 2008; Gleba 2008; Meyers 2013.

3 We would like to thank Professor Peter Attema and the Groningen Institute of Archaeology for their ongoing support for our material studies and publications of the GIA excavations 1991–2004 and 2008–2010. We likewise thank the Carlsberg and Ny Carlsberg Foundations for financing the studies and publications. The present article relies on the results obtained during the excavations carried out between 1991 and 2004 under the direction of Marianne Kleibrink and Peter Attema. Additional information is included from the recent GIA excavations, which took place between 2008 and 2010 under the direction of Peter Attema and Jan Kindberg Jacobsen, as well as the annual material study campaigns carried out since 2001 under the direction of Jan

Kindberg Jacobsen, authorised by and on behalf of Groningen University.

4 Jacobsen and Handberg 2010, 11.

5 Attema *et al.* 1998, 332.

6 The excavation of Building VI and the adjacent area will continue in 2017.

7 Kleibrink 2005, 755.

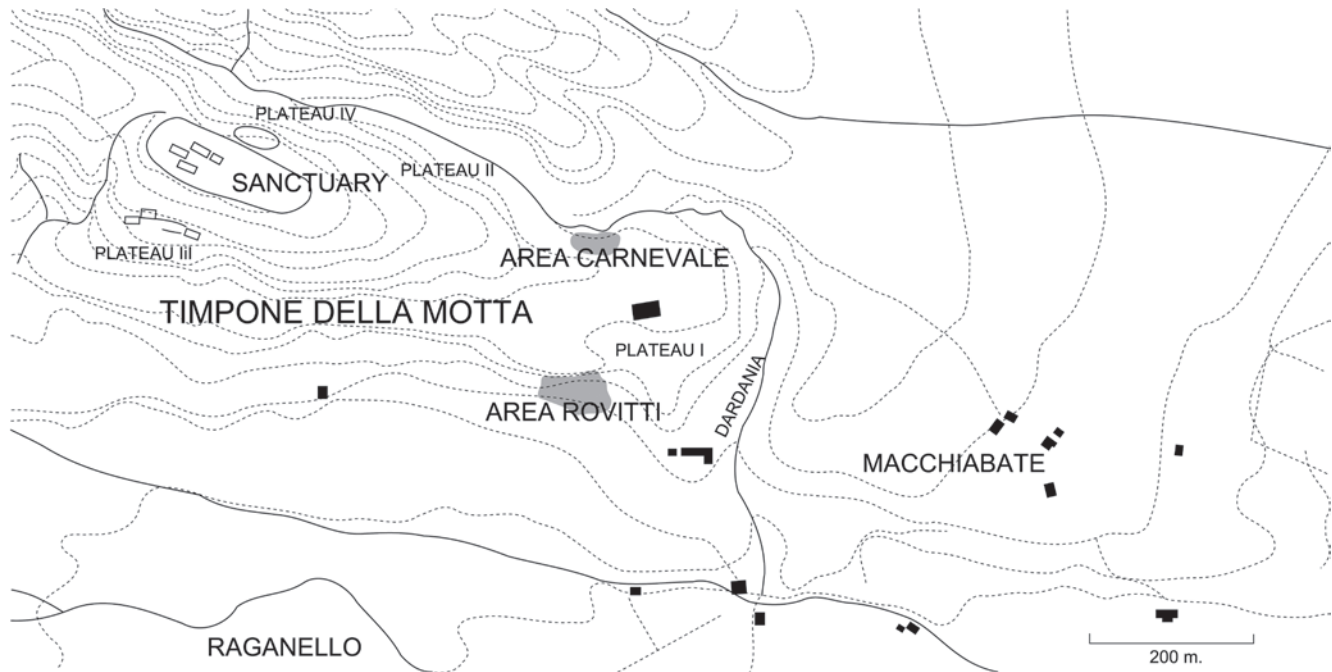


Figure 9.1. Map of Timpone della Motta. Illustration: S.G. Saxkjær (adapted from Jacobsen & Handberg 2010, 12, fig. 1).

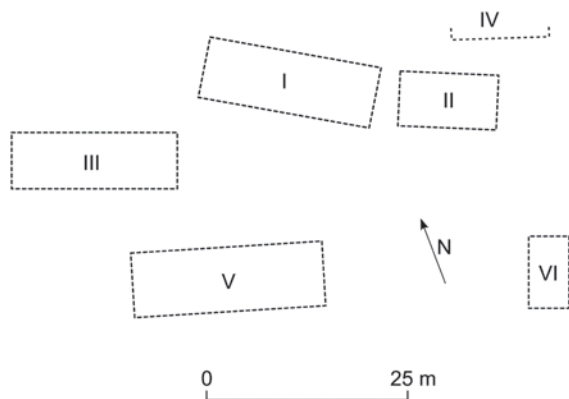


Figure 9.2. Map of the sanctuary (Building I-VI). Illustration: S.G. Saxkjær.

have caused irreversible damage to the stratigraphy and to the contextual understanding of the site. Substantial stratigraphical information was encountered during the excavation of Building V; however, these records are yet to be fully published.

### Building V and related finds

The so-called Area Chiesetta is located in the southwestern part of the sanctuary and takes its name from the still partly preserved remains of a 10th-century Byzantine chapel. In

1967–1968, Dutch archaeologist Maria Stoop discovered earlier strata beneath the chapel,<sup>8</sup> which she interpreted as part of a foundation offering, which had been made in relation to a small temple, dating from the 6th century BCE.<sup>9</sup> In 1992, the GIA team under the direction of Marianne Kleibrink undertook further excavations in the area, which resulted in the discovery of Building V. In 2004, the last part of the building was brought to light. Several building phases have been detected in relation to Building V, which have been interpreted as the following sequence:<sup>10</sup> **Building Va** (Fig. 9.3) is construed as a late Middle Bronze Age dwelling (3.09 m × 2.15 m) dug into the conglomerate bedrock with timber posts.<sup>11</sup> The following building phase, **Building Vb** (Fig. 9.3), is interpreted as an apsidal timber longhouse (8 m × 26 m) with postholes sunk into the conglomerate. This building was in use from the late 9th/early 8th century until c. 725 BCE, when it was replaced by Building Vc. **Building Vc** (Fig. 9.3) is a rectangular timber building with a potential tripartite interior and postholes sunk into the conglomerate bedrock. The building was in use from c. 725 until c. 650 BCE. **Building Vd** is a rectangular building with walls of dried mudbricks on a stone foundation. The

8 Kleibrink 2006, 112.

9 Stoop's excavations in the sanctuary were partly published through a series of preliminary reports. See Stoop 1979; 1980; 1983; 1985; 1987; 1988; 1989; 1990.

10 Jacobsen and Handberg 2010, 18–41.

11 Kleibrink 2006, 135.

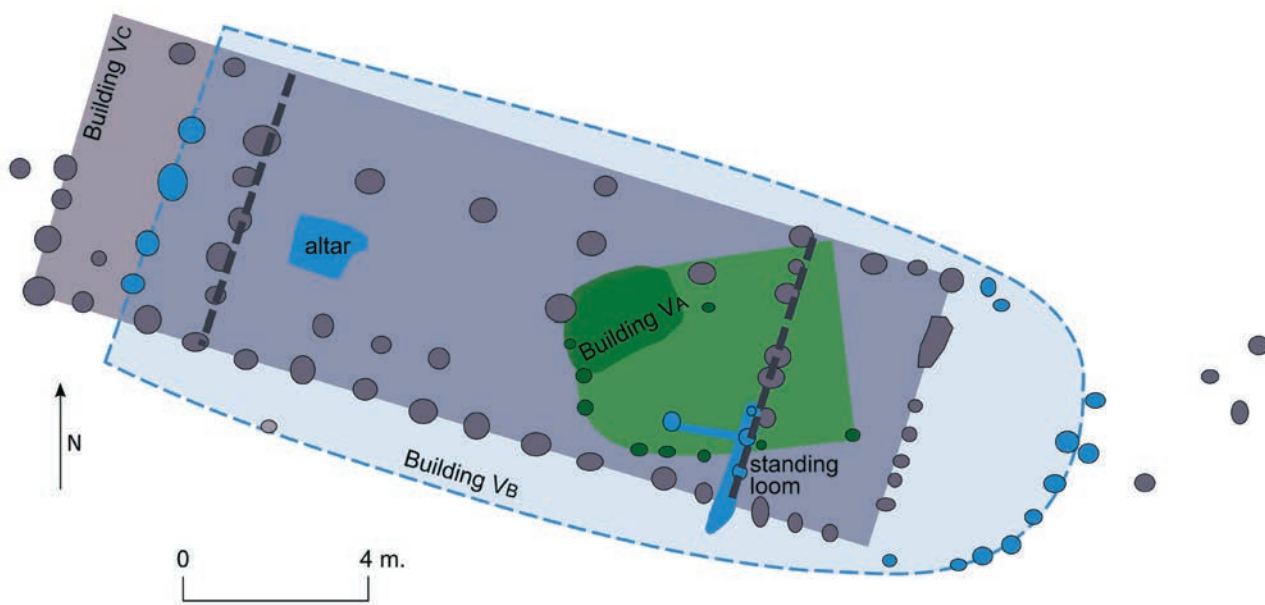


Figure 9.3. Building V (phase a-c). Illustration: S.G. Saxkjær (adapted from Kleibrink 2004, 75, fig. 27).

structure was in use from c. 650–620/615 BCE, and this building phase is characterised by a levelling and filling of the pre-existing postholes. It was later superimposed by **Building Ve**, which was located on top of a gravel layer. This gravel layer is understood to have been part of a larger reorganisation of the sanctuary in the late 7th century BCE. There is very little evidence of the latest building phase aside from a few deposits which date the building to within the 6th century BCE.<sup>12</sup>

Central to the topic of textile production in the sanctuary on Timpone della Motta is Building Vb, dating from the 8th century BCE. In the western part of the structure, a roughly circular area was identified on the conglomerate rock. The spot had continuously been in close contact with fire, and it was at first interpreted as an open-air altar. However, this interpretation has later been replaced by that of a hearth in a separate room within the structure,<sup>13</sup> as well as by that of an altar in a courtyard enclosure (Fig. 9.4).<sup>14</sup>

The finds related to Building Vb are of a conspicuous character, as various kinds of precious artefacts were discovered in the remaining soil on top of the altar/hearth and in the fissures and cracks in the bedrock. All of the artefacts can be dated to within the 8th century BCE, and the vast majority consist of personal ornaments in bronze, such as fibulae, spirals, girdles, braid fasteners and pendants;

the last-named depicting human couples (Fig. 9.5).<sup>15</sup> The finds correspond to those previously made by Stoop in the same area.<sup>16</sup> Locally produced shards of impasto *situlae* and fragments of indigenous matt-painted pottery were also found.<sup>17</sup> The altar/hearth had generated a substantial amount of ash, which had been accumulated on the brink of the hill. The deposit of ash contained bones of piglets, but no carbonised plant remains other than wood, which points towards an exclusively ritual context.<sup>18</sup> In accordance, the above-mentioned bronze statuettes of human couples likewise indicate a ritual context.<sup>19</sup> In addition to the altar/hearth, a loom was identified in the central space of the building, based on a number of *in situ* loom weights. The loom weights were found in two rows of approximately 2.10 to 2.30 m. The weights (between 800 and 1,200 g) indicate that this would have been a large loom equipped for producing heavy textiles.<sup>20</sup> For the time being, these *in situ* loom weights constitute the only traces of an actual loom discovered in the sanctuary.

<sup>12</sup> Jacobsen and Handberg 2010, 41.

<sup>13</sup> Kleibrink 2005, 759.

<sup>14</sup> Attema 2008, 80; Kleibrink 2004, 77.

<sup>15</sup> For recent work on the anthropomorphic couple, see Brocato and Grasso 2011.

<sup>16</sup> Kleibrink 2004, 78.

<sup>17</sup> Kleibrink *et al.* 2004, 45.

<sup>18</sup> Attema 2008, 80; Jacobsen 2007, 106.

<sup>19</sup> Kleibrink 2004, 78.

<sup>20</sup> Kleibrink 2008, 21.

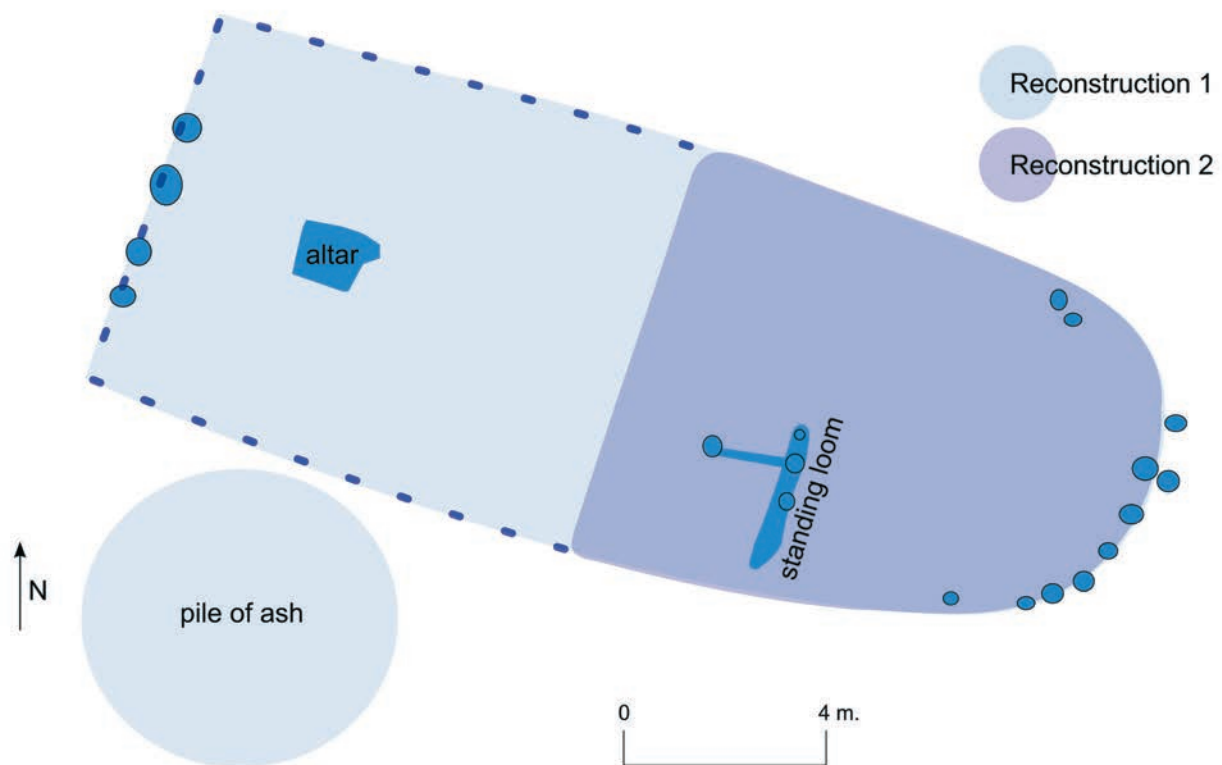


Figure 9.4. Building Vb. Illustration: S.G. Saxkjær.

The *in situ* loom weights are decorated with a very characteristic labyrinth motif (Fig. 9.6).<sup>21</sup> In addition, some of them are adorned with a stylised representation of a creature – most likely a horse or a deer – in the centre of the labyrinth pattern. In relation to the labyrinth pattern, parallels can be found within funerary contexts at Canale Ianchina<sup>22</sup> as well as at Incoronata.<sup>23</sup> Paola Zancani Montuoro has linked the iconography with the Cretan palaces and the legend of the Minotaur,<sup>24</sup> which has partly been supported by Kleibrink. However, Kleibrink has further connected the worship in the sanctuary on Timpone della Motta to the legend of Epeios and the mythical site of Lagaria.<sup>25</sup> In this regard, she has suggested a possible link between the creature in the centre of the labyrinth and the Trojan Horse, which, according to the legend, was built by Epeios.<sup>26</sup>

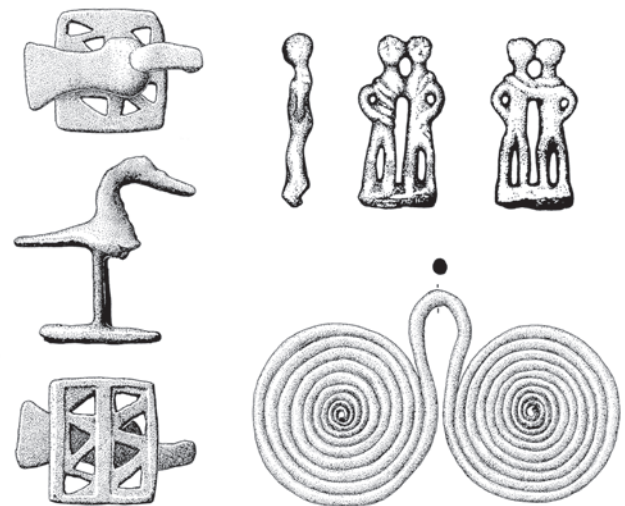


Figure 9.5. Bronze ornaments from Building Vb. Groningen Institute of Archaeology.

### The nature of Building Vb

As mentioned in the above, a ceramic assemblage was unearthed within the structure of Building Vb in addition to the loom weights and spindle whorls. The pottery

21 Stoop 1972, 65–66, pl. XXVI; Attema 1998, 337.

22 Orsi 1926, pl. XVII.

23 Chiartano 1994, 75, tav. 31.

24 Zancani Montuoro 1975.

25 Kleibrink *et al.* 2004; Kleibrink 2005.

26 Kleibrink 2008, 20.





Figure 9.6. Loom weights from Building Vb. Groningen Institute of Archaeology.

assemblage, consisting of cooking stoves and impasto cooking pots, can further be linked to the weaving activities. More specifically, the vessels were most likely used in connection with the cleaning and dyeing of wool.<sup>27</sup> In all probability, only women took part in the weaving as well as in the associated activities, which indicates that Building Vb represented a very distinct craft area. Moreover, the bronze ornaments indicate that the women were accorded high status and position in the contemporary society at Timpone della Motta. It has even been proposed that the women should be regarded as associated with the lavish female burials in the nearby Macchiabate-necropolis, which, in addition to a range of similar bronze ornaments, contained loom weights.<sup>28</sup> Furthermore, it has likewise been suggested that the women working in Building Vb were involved in ceremonial weaving, allegedly associated with a goddess, who was worshipped in the 8th century BCE.<sup>29</sup>

In the attempt to clarify the nature of Building Vb, the interpretation proposed by Kleibrink represents an obvious starting point. From very early on in the excavations of Building V, Kleibrink linked ritual weaving to the sanctuary<sup>30</sup> and named Building Vb the “House of Weaving”. She has further identified the plateau as an 8th-century acropolis, based on the presence of the altar and the potential existence of a fence or *temenos* wall surrounding the sanctuary. In Kleibrink’s designation of Building Vb, she draws heavily on contemporary Greek parallels, although she interprets the function of the structure as “an aristocratic dwelling where special weaving festivities took place”.<sup>31</sup> In addition, she understands the sanctuary to be



Figure 9.7. 7th-century BCE terracotta pinax, Athena holding a folded peplos. Groningen Institute of Archaeology.

purely indigenous during the phase of Building Vb.<sup>32</sup> While this understanding is inconsistent with her use of Greek parallels and terminology, Kleibrink explains the Greek parallels of the so-called House of Weaving with a tentative reference to trans-Adriatic contact, exemplified in the findings of Italic 8th-century objects in Greece.<sup>33</sup>

27 Attema *et al.* 1998, 337; Attema 2008, 80; Kleibrink 2004, 78.

28 Kleibrink 2004, 78.

29 Attema 2008, 80.

30 Kleibrink 1993, 14.

31 Kleibrink 2005, 759.

32 Kleibrink and Sangineto 1998, 8.

33 Kleibrink 2005, 759.

Kleibrink interprets the next phase, Building Vc, as a temple (Fig. 9.3).<sup>34</sup> As elucidated in the above, the building was in use from c. 725 BCE–650 BCE,<sup>35</sup> thereby representing a period in which the material culture of Timpone della Motta underwent a prominent shift from an indigenous to a Greek or Greek-inspired material culture, as the production of matt-painted pottery ceased within the second quarter of the 7th century BCE.<sup>36</sup> Besides, the construction of Building Vc has been interpreted as a Greek design with a tripartition of the interior into *pronaos*, *naos* and *adyton* in combination with indigenous building techniques in the form of wooden posts thrust in postholes sunk into the conglomerate bedrock.<sup>37</sup> Since Building Vc was erected on top of the so-called House of Weaving, Kleibrink interprets its position as evidence of a continuation in ritual function and as a sign of the importance of the weaving cult in the indigenous society; a cult which, in her opinion, predates the arrival of the Greeks.<sup>38</sup>

### A possible continuation in customs related to weaving activities

Looking beyond the contexts of Building Vb, spindle whorls and loom weights are frequently present throughout the full time-span of the sanctuary<sup>39</sup> together with additional indicators of weaving rituals. One example of a potential ritual connected to weaving is found on a 7th-century terracotta *pinax*, which is interpreted as depicting a seated Athena holding a folded *peplos* in her lap (Fig. 9.7).<sup>40</sup> In addition, the excavations in the sanctuary have yielded several 6th-century terracotta figurines, which depict women holding cloth or yarn; the figurines could be worshippers or the goddess herself (Fig. 9.8).<sup>41</sup> Among others, Kleibrink has stated that the *pinax*, which is called “Athena seated in a naiskos”, together with the terracotta figurines provide a strong iconographic evidence for a continued focus – directly or indirectly – on textile production and dedication.<sup>42</sup> In addition, another 7th-century terracotta image called “The Lady of Sybaris” has been identified as a standing Athena, dressed in a skirt with figural bands (Fig. 9.9). Kleibrink has even suggested that this could be a depiction of the



Figure 9.8. 6th-century BCE terracotta figurines, women holding cloth or yarn. Groningen Institute of Archaeology.



Figure 9.9. 7th-century BCE terracotta image, ‘The Lady of Sybaris’. Illustration: S.G. Saxkjær (adapted from Zancani Montuoro 1971, 68, fig. 1).

34 Kleibrink 2005, 761.

35 Jacobsen and Handberg 2010, 25.

36 Handberg and Jacobsen 2011, 180; Jacobsen and Handberg 2010, 30.

37 Kleibrink 2004, 78; Jacobsen and Handberg 2010, 25.

38 Kleibrink and Sangineto 1998, 8.

39 Kleibrink 2004, 54.

40 Kleibrink 1993, 8; Gleba 2008, 185.

41 Kleibrink 2001, 51.

42 Kleibrink 1993, 14.



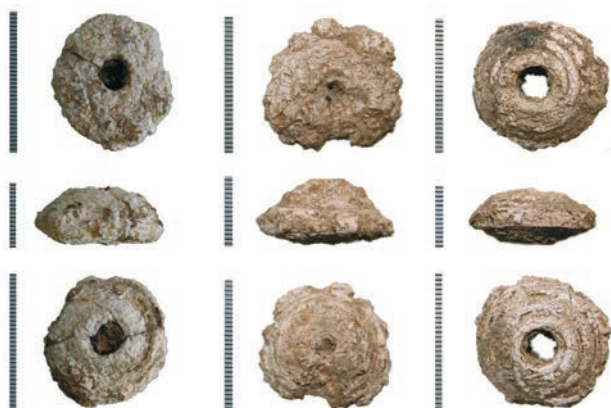


Figure 9.10. Coarse glass-paste spindle whorls from Building Vb. Groningen Institute of Archaeology.

cult statue.<sup>43</sup> Moreover, in connection with the possibility of a ritual textile production in the sanctuary, as Margarita Gleba has suggested, “it seems likely that a special robe may have been woven for the patron divinity starting in the Early Iron Age”.<sup>44</sup>

While it seems certain that a textile production was operating in the 8th century BCE, the evidence for an actual production becomes more elusive in the subsequent centuries. In the case of Building Vb, most of the associated material is of a distinct indigenous material style, and it has been paralleled in detail in the contemporary graves at the nearby Macchiabate necropolis.<sup>45</sup> The recent excavations (2009–2010) in the so-called Area Rovitti have brought parts of a hut structure to light (labelled Structure A), which is contemporary with Building Vb.<sup>46</sup> The analyses of the associated finds reveal an indigenous material – pottery, weaving implements *etc.* – very similar to that of Building Vb. Hence, the indigenous material culture reflected in Building Vb is – except for minor variations – similar to the material culture encountered in the indigenous graves and in the settlement contexts at the site. However, towards the very end of the 8th century BCE, the sanctuary began to take on its own material characteristics, which are seen through an increasing ritualisation of the material culture. Above all, this is detectable through the introduction of miniature pottery as well as iconography depicting ritual scenes, which was shortly followed by the introduction of terracotta figurines and vessels with distinct ritual purposes.<sup>47</sup> In the middle of the 7th century BCE, most indigenous characteristics had disappeared

from the deposited material, which, from this point onwards, was composed of Greek imports or locally-produced pottery executed in a Greek material style, *i.e.* the so-called Colonial Ware. As a result, the number of textile implements is notably lower in the 7th century BCE than in the previous century, and it becomes difficult to assess whether or not the implements are residual, as is the case with the majority of indigenous matt-painted pottery and impasto ware in the 7th-century contexts in the sanctuary. Still, evidence from the nearby indigenous necropolis at Amendolara shows that 8th-century types of loom weights and spindle whorls remained in use during the 7th century BCE,<sup>48</sup> giving substantial grounds to assume that at least some of the implements at Timpone della Motta are contemporary with Building Vd. However, as is evident from a late 6th-century burial in the Paladino necropolis in Amendolara, Iron Age textile implements also remained in use as family heirlooms for centuries in the indigenous communities of the Sibaritide.<sup>49</sup>

In addition to the above-mentioned loom weights and spindle whorls, an examination of the small finds from Building Vd leads us to suggest that two classes of what have until now been categorised as beads may in fact be spindle whorls. Around 30 relatively well-preserved specimens in coarse glass-paste as well as numerous fragments have come to light in contexts related to the 7th-century structure of Building Vd (Fig. 9.10). In contrast, these potential coarse glass-paste spindle whorls are completely absent from 8th-century contexts. Their shape, size and weight, as well as the diameter of their holes, correspond closely to those of spindle whorls in clay, which suggest that they could have had a similar use.

The origin of this type of spindle whorls is somewhat intriguing, as, in general, the corpora of small objects in glass, faience or bone from Timpone della Motta are made up of imports. To a great extent, these material groups find exact parallels among the archaic votive assemblages of the sanctuaries in mainland Greece. The type in question, however, only seems to be present in the sanctuary contexts of Timpone Motta, which could suggest that it is a local or regionally produced group. In this connection, it is worthwhile considering whether a group of large decorated East Greek faience beads may also have served as spindle whorls rather than as ornaments (Fig. 9.11). In other Italian contexts dating to the late 8th and 7th centuries BCE, it has already been suggested that identical faience objects should indeed be interpreted as spindle whorls. Among these, the most notable concentration is found in 7th-century female burials in Syracuse.<sup>50</sup>

43 Kleibrink 1993, 9.

44 Gleba 2008, 185.

45 See *e.g.* Kleibrink 2003.

46 Jacobsen and Handberg 2012; Jacobsen, Handberg and Mittica 2009.

47 Jacobsen and Handberg 2010, 28–31.

48 See *e.g.* La Genière 1973, 7–32, fig. 20 (tomb 68).

49 La Genière 2012, 83, (tomb 161).

50 Hencken 1958, fig. 3 (grave 205), fig. 15. (108), fig. 23b (grave 421), fig. 25a (grave 165).



Figure 9.11. East Greek faience beads/spindle whorls. Groningen Institute of Archaeology.



Figure 9.12. Matt-painted kalathos. Groningen Institute of Archaeology.



Figure 9.13. Euboean-Cycladic styled kalathos. Groningen Institute of Archaeology.

While weaving implements thus continued to reach the sanctuary during the 7th century BCE, it does remain an open question whether weaving was actually taking place, as was the case in the preceding Building Vb, or if the implements were given as votive gifts in their own right. The presence and use of the faience spindle whorls and the potential spindle whorls in glass-paste seem to be



Figure 9.14. Corinthian kalathoi. Groningen Institute of Archaeology.

limited to the sanctuary, as both types are absent from the contemporary burials in the Macchiabate necropolis, which argues somewhat in favour of the latter possibility, that is, that the spindle whorls were presented as votive gifts. Yet, since our knowledge of the sanctuary in its 7th-century phase is limited to Building Vd and the related votive deposits, one possibility does not exclude the other.

Related to the textile production, and surely to be regarded as votive offerings, are the frequent finds of open-worked *kalathoi*.<sup>51</sup> The vase itself is a miniature clay version of the much bigger reed baskets, which are frequently seen within the imagery of Athenian vase painting, where they are depicted as containing wool during textile production. Among other functions, this use of the basket is likewise described in the literary sources.<sup>52</sup> In addition to being a frequent shape in Geometric burials in Lefkandi and beyond, the *kalathos* is well-attested in Greek sanctuaries, where the Proto-Corinthian specimens from Perachora are particularly comparable to the finds from the Timpone della Motta.<sup>53</sup> The *kalathoi* appeared in the sanctuary on Timpone della Motta towards the end of the Late Geometric period in three different locally-produced versions, of which one is decorated in a matt-painted bichrome technique (Fig. 9.12), while the remaining two are based on Boeotian and Euboean-Cycladic prototypes (Fig. 9.13).

The open-worked Corinthian *kalathos* (Fig. 9.14) became a popular object of dedication during the 7th century BCE together with Corinthian and Colonial closed-walled *kalathoi* (Fig. 9.15). As late as in the 6th century BCE, the open-worked *kalathoi* continued to be dedicated in the sanctuary (Fig. 9.16).<sup>54</sup>

<sup>51</sup> Mittica 2006; Mittica 2010.

<sup>52</sup> Trinkl 2014, 186.

<sup>53</sup> Perachora II, pl. 36

<sup>54</sup> Jacobsen and Handberg 2010, 93.



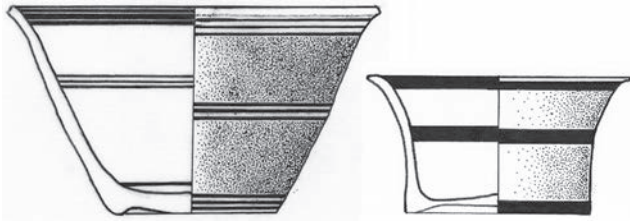


Figure 9.15. Corinthian and Colonial closed-walled kalathoi. Groningen Institute of Archaeology.



Figure 9.16. 6th century BCE open-worked kalathos. Groningen Institute of Archaeology.

In the light of the substantial link between wool and the *kalathos* being depicted in vase paintings, the miniature *kalathoi* from the sanctuary might have contained wool for dedication.<sup>55</sup> Kleibrink has suggested that this interpretation could be expanded to include the hundreds, if not thousands, of Corinthian *pyxides* that have been exhumed in the sanctuary, which, in her opinion, could have contained “fluffs of unspun wool” for dedication.<sup>56</sup>

### The reception of previous interpretations of Building Vb

Returning to the nature of Building Vb, Kleibrink’s interpretation of the structure as having a cultic function as well as her interpretation of a continuation in cult practice have not been widely accepted among Italian scholars dealing with the archaeology of Magna Graecia. The same is true of the idea of a Greek-indigenous co-existence and cooperation in the following Building Vc. In Pier Giovanni Guzzo’s recent book on the archaeology of Southern Italy, he devotes a full section to Building V, in which he argues for a non-existence of ritual elements in Building Vb. He further stresses that while the cult activities imagined by

Kleibrink are comparable to those known from the Greek cultural sphere, there are absolutely no parallels to such activities in the indigenous cultural horizon of Southern Italy.<sup>57</sup> In the same manner, a recent article by the late Silvana Luppino and others denies the supposed religious nature of Building Vb,<sup>58</sup> while Maria Tommasa Granese has presented an overview of the development of the sanctuary, in which she completely ignores the argument altogether.<sup>59</sup> However, the reluctance to accept indigenous cultic activity and the Greek-indigenous co-existence and cooperation before and contemporary with the foundation of Sybaris seems to relate less to the nature of the evidence and more to the implications that this interpretation has for the traditional view on the Greek so-called colonisation of Southern Italy, in which the indigenous population is subjected to a harsh and immediate colonisation by the Achaeans.<sup>60</sup>

On the other hand, researchers dealing with Southern Italy from other perspectives have offered a different interpretation for Building Vb. In Gleba’s book on textile production in pre-Roman Italy, she examines the material from Timpone della Motta and supports the idea of a textile production on Timpone della Motta in the 8th century BCE. Concerning the possible nature of Building Vb, Gleba has stated, “Because subsequent building phases of this building are demonstrably a succession of temples, it is usually assumed that the hut, too, was a temple, dedicated, according to Kleibrink, to the ‘Lady of the Loom’”. By this, she seemingly accepts a continuation in cult practice across the cultural shift triggered by the Greeks’ arrival in the late 8th century BCE.<sup>61</sup> Furthermore, Gleba puts forward the previously mentioned 7th-century terracotta image (Fig. 9.9), the so-called “The Lady of Sybaris”, as an example of a depiction of textiles with complex patterns, which could support a high level of craftsmanship at Timpone della Motta.<sup>62</sup> What is more, Gleba supports the idea of a peplophoric ritual in the sanctuary at least from the 7th century BCE onwards,<sup>63</sup> as quoted in the above. Gretchen Meyers also revisits the material from Timpone della Motta in a recent article, in which she supports Kleibrink in her interpretation of Building Vb as being a religious edifice, although Meyers adds that the building might as well have served communal activities. Meyers further accepts the idea of a continuation in religious activities.<sup>64</sup> Based on Kleibrink’s research, Meyers further states that the Oinotrian

<sup>57</sup> Guzzo 2011.

<sup>58</sup> Luppino *et al.* 2012, 645–648.

<sup>59</sup> Granese 2006.

<sup>60</sup> Guzzo 1982; 1987; De Polignac 1995.

<sup>61</sup> Gleba 2008, 185–186.

<sup>62</sup> Gleba 2008, 26.

<sup>63</sup> Gleba 2008, 185.

<sup>64</sup> Meyer 2013, 268.

<sup>55</sup> A similar use of ceramic *kalathoi* has been suggested by Elisabeth Trinkl, see Trinkl 2014, 187.

<sup>56</sup> Kleibrink 2005, 766.

textile tradition merged with the Greek peplophoric ritual in the late 8th century BCE.<sup>65</sup>

### An early Greek presence

Kleibrink's interpretation of Building Vb is centred on a supposed indigenous religious identity in connection with the structure. However, this interpretation was formulated in a very early stage of the excavations, where substantial parts of the archaeological material had not yet undergone detailed studies. The research conducted by the GIA since 2008 as well as additional excavations in 2008–2010 have clarified that the cultural diversity of Building Vb is much more complex than originally assumed by Kleibrink. By this, we are referring first and foremost to the individuation of clearly Greek trends in the material culture, which is specifically reflected in Building Vb as well as at the site in general.<sup>66</sup>

The chronological horizon to which Building Vb belongs has traditionally been assumed to have been free of Greek material interference. However, our recent investigations have individuated a still limited, but steadily increasing number of Corinthian and Euboean imported ceramics of the Middle Geometric period. This is the case both in the material from Building Vb as well as from the recent excavations on and around the Timpone della Motta. Even so, more significant is the identification of a substantial group of locally produced Iron Age pottery, termed Oinotrian-Euboean ware.<sup>67</sup> Before 2005, the quantity of Oinotrian-Euboean pottery found in relation to Building Vb and Building Vc amounted to approximately 210 individual vessels and consisted mostly of Greek-type *skyphoi* and indigenous-type *scodelle*, although the assemblage further contained a number of larger *kraters*, *lekanai*, *oinochoai*, *amphorae* decorated with typical Euboean geometric motifs. Even though the amount of Oinotrian-Euboean material is notable, the greater part of the material related to Building Vb and Building Vc remains in an indigenous material style. During the 2009 excavation in the sanctuary, a number of contexts from the last quarter of the 8th century BCE were unearthed underneath a retaining wall located to the south of Building V. The assemblages from these contexts show a predominance of indigenous matt-painted pottery, but also a clear presence of Oinotrian-Euboean, Corinthian Late

Geometric and Iapygian pottery.<sup>68</sup> In 2008, the remains of an additional Iron Age building were discovered underneath a 6th-century building in the central part of the sanctuary. The contexts belonging to the Iron Age hut are limited to the stratigraphy of the related postholes and contexts located immediately on top of the bedrock, but the material again exhibits the same ratio: numerous indigenous matt-painted vessels together with fewer Oinotrian-Euboean fragments. Based on these results from the recent excavations, we conclude that the use of Oinotrian-Euboean pottery was a general phenomenon in the sanctuary during the 8th century BCE.

The excavations conducted by the GIA in 2009–2010 in the so-called Area Rovitti on the southern slopes of Timpone della Motta have expanded the understanding of this particular pottery production as well as its wider cultural implications. In Area Rovitti, parts of two hut structures (A and B) were partially excavated in the near vicinity of remains of several pottery kilns from the 8th century BCE. As mentioned in the above, Structure A is contemporary with Building Vb, while Structure B dates from the late 8th–early 7th century BCE.

More than 800 Oinotrian-Euboean fragments were unearthed from the structures together with slightly larger quantities of matt-painted fragments. The preliminary interpretation suggests that the huts might have served as dwellings for families operating the pottery production in the nearby *kerameikos* area. This is indicated by the occurrence of slightly misfired and defective pottery Oinotrian-Euboean pottery, which was used in the household. Unfinished “test pieces” decorated with attempted concentric circles have even been exhumed within the huts. In addition, the frequent finds of weaving implements, which were discovered in association with jewellery, indicate that the activities in the huts also included the production of textiles.

The archaeological research tradition advocates caution in postulating direct connections between Greek imports and an actual Greek presence. This is certainly justified, since imported Greek vessels are likely to have been distributed through trade routes, which did not necessarily involve any Greek presence.

The archaeological situation at Timpone della Motta does, however, include elements, which strongly indicate a direct Euboean presence, namely in the form of the described locally-based production of highly Euboeanising pottery. While individual Greek pots may have arrived via various trade routes that did not involve Greeks, it is difficult to say the same of a Greek workshop tradition, which would have demanded a detailed, first-hand knowledge of the technological, typological and stylistic aspects of Greek manufacture of fine ware. This becomes even more

65 Meyer 2013, 269.

66 Jacobsen 2013; Jacobsen and Handberg 2010; Jacobsen, Handberg and Mittica 2009; Jacobsen, Mittica and Handberg 2009; Saxkjær and Jacobsen 2014.

67 It is important to stress that the term “Oinotrian-Euboean” only refers to the geographical location of the production, whereas it does not imply an indigenous stylistic component.

68 Jacobsen 2013, 3.



Figure 9.17. Oinothrian-Euboean stand. Illustration: H.B. Thusing.

the case when comparing the fundamental technological, typological and stylistic differences between the production of Oinothrian-Euboean and contemporary indigenous matt-painted pottery. The matt-painted pottery was manufactured by hand in a coiling technique, whereas the Oinothrian-Euboean vessels were wheel-thrown. This means that a strict typological division between the two groups is evident. The matt-painted pottery relied exclusively on indigenous shapes such as *askoi*, *scodelle* and biconical jars, which only underwent minor typological developments in the course of the 8th century BCE. In contrast, the Oinothrian-Euboean pottery closely copied typical Greek shapes, especially in the form of the *skyphoi*, which followed the rapid typological development of the Geometric *skyphoi* in mainland Greece. In the same way, the decoration on the larger Oinothrian-Euboean shapes reveals a detailed coherency with the decoration on Late Geometric Euboean pottery, especially with the decoration known from Eretria. A detailed stylistic correspondence can be observed in several cases, e.g. between the Cesnola Painter-inspired fragments from the Apollon Daphnéphoros sanctuary in Eretria and a decorated stand from Timpone della Motta (Fig. 9.17). Several other Oinothrian-Euboean vessels have complex stylistic features, which seems to be isolated to Eretria.<sup>69</sup>

It might be worth considering whether an 8th-century Greek presence at the site of Timpone della Motta could have had an influence on the formulation of the religious rites, which received their expression later during the 7th century BCE and continued in the 6th century BCE. Notably the mentioned frequent stylistic correspondences with Eretrian pottery is interesting, when it is kept in mind that a series of jugs from the sacred area of Artemis within the sanctuary of Apollon Daphnéphoros are decorated with scenes of women weaving.<sup>70</sup> It seems probable that the

supposed Greek peplophoric ritual on Timpone della Motta could be a spin-off from a similar ritual in the sacred area of Artemis in Eretria.

One related aspect is that of the technical knowledge and craftsmanship. From the Greek mainland, an interesting parallel to elements in the textile production is found at Aetolian Chalkis. In the 7th-century settlement at Agia Triada, recent research has revealed new insights into the organisation of complex and specialised textile-production.<sup>71</sup> The settlement at Agia Triada was initially established in the early 7th-century BC, but both the habitation as well as the textile production only took place at the site during short periods with intervals, which have been linked by the excavators to ritual beliefs and practices. The excavation in the area, which was carried out in 1995–2001, has revealed a large house with several rooms. The house has been linked to a ritual sphere; perhaps it belonged to the family of a priest or priestess. It contained both equipment for communal dining as well as for large-scale textile production; the house even had distinct so-called “loom rooms”, in which several carved drains have come to light. It has been suggested that the drains played an important role in the textile production; either for cleaning raw materials or for creating a high air humidity, which was necessary in order to prevent the fragile threads breaking during weaving. In connection with the present article, this technical feature of the loom rooms is of special interest, as a similar drain was unearthed next to the two rows of *in situ* loom weights at Timpone della Motta (Fig. 9.3–9.4). In all probability, the carved drain at Timpone della Motta served a similar purpose as those of the loom rooms at Chalkis, and it is worth considering whether this technical feature could have been part of a Greek weaving know-how, which was brought to the site by the Greek settlers.

It is important to emphasise that although Aetolian Chalkis did play a role in the Greek so-called colonisation, there is no reason to believe that there was any direct contact between Chalkis and Timpone della Motta. Nevertheless, the sites' material culture bears a strong resemblance – perhaps due to an Achaeon influence at both sites. For instance, this resemblance is seen in the large quantities of Corinthian pottery that occurs at both sites. Some very particular shapes are even closely paralleled at the two sites; one example is found in the form of a certain type of Corinthian *louteria*.<sup>72</sup> In relation to the Corinthian pottery found in the loom rooms at Chalkis, the excavators have made an interesting observation: the quantities and distribution of Corinthian fine-ware cups, bowls and smaller containers, such as *pyxides*, indicate that the vessels had a special function in

<sup>69</sup> Jacobsen, Handberg and Mittica 2009.

<sup>70</sup> Eretria XIV, 1, 131–132; 141–142.

<sup>71</sup> We are grateful to Sanne Houby-Nielsen, who has kindly provided us with notes on the subject from her forthcoming publication, *Chalkis Aetolias II*.

<sup>72</sup> D'Andrea and Jacobsen 2010, 1–16.



relation to the textile production, perhaps as containers for textile implements. The same types of vessels have been found in large numbers at the sanctuary at Timpone della Motta. As mentioned in the above, Kleibrink has suggested that the Corinthian *pyxides* were dedicated containing “fluffs of unspun wool”.<sup>73</sup> We find it reasonable to suggest that the vessels did hold items – yarn, implements *etc.* – connected with weaving, and that the interpretation should be extended to include cups, bowls and other containers, as is the case in the loom rooms at Chalkis.

### Concluding remarks

Returning to Building Vb, we find there to be substantial evidence to suggest a Greek influence on the activities, which took place within the building – both in the case of the ritual activities themselves as well as in the case of the technical expertise. By this, we are advocating that an active and direct cultural exchange between Greeks and indigenous inhabitants was taking place more than half a century before the foundation of Sybaris. Within this cultural framework, there might be a narrow space, which supports some degree of religious practice in Building Vb. However, this religious practice was not the result of an independent manifestation of indigenous religious sentiments, but caused by cultural exchange and religious transmittance between various groups, among these Euboean and indigenous inhabitants.

Moreover, it has become increasingly relevant to evaluate the possibility of communal purposes, not only of Building Vb, but also the following Building Vc. In relation to this, we refer to the large hut structure discovered by Massimo Osanna and his team at Torre Satriano.<sup>74</sup> The structure does at least from a diachronic perspective, present credible inspiration for an extension of the cultural interpretation of Building Vb and Building Vc so that this would also include interactions and gift exchanges between the indigenous elite, on a local and regional level, as well as with foreigners of Greek and Levantine origin. Adding further support to Building Vb having a communal as well as potential ritual significance, Mario Denti and his team have recently – during the excavation campaign of 2013 – unearthed an 8th-century apsidal building at Incoronata “greca”.<sup>75</sup> The layout and chronology of the building closely resemble that of Building Vb on Timpone della Motta. Based on contemporary parallels, Denti argues that the building could have a dual purpose as a place of worship as well as a residence for the “ruler” in the local community.<sup>76</sup> It seems likely that Building Vb could have acquired a similar function.

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<sup>73</sup> Kleibrink 2005, 766.

<sup>74</sup> Carollo 2013, 19–32.

<sup>75</sup> Denti 2014, 12.

<sup>76</sup> Denti 2014, 13.



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## The loom weights from the “Scarico di Grotta Vanella”: Evidence for a sanctuary on the north acropolis of Segesta?

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The archaeological site known as the “Scarico di Grotta Vanella” at Segesta is located on the lower eastern slopes of the Monte Barbaro. It is positioned more or less at the bottom of a vertical imaginary line to the so-called north acropolis of Segesta, situated on the Monte Barbaro, more directly aligned with the Agora area and the Norman Castle. Surface finds in the area in the 1950s of black-glazed pottery with graffiti in the local “Elymian” language<sup>2</sup> instigated

further investigation by the *Soprintendenza alle Antichità della Sicilia occidentale* and under the direction of Vincenzo Tusa in 1957.<sup>3</sup> Subsequent excavation campaigns in the late 1970s by V. Tusa and Juliette de la Genière explored four 3 m × 2 m trenches up to 12 metres deep.<sup>4</sup> The recovered finds suggested a sacred primary context for the material which, most probably, had been dumped from the area of the north acropolis of Segesta.<sup>5</sup> An exhaustive publication of the material from the deposit is in course,<sup>6</sup> thus the present observations are limited to a select part of one set of data, the loom weights, and should be taken as preliminary.

The finds include Attic import-type ware, mainly *kylikes*, *skyphoi* and *krateroi* indicative of ritual consumption,<sup>7</sup> as well as indigenous ware for the preparing of food stuffs,<sup>8</sup>

1 I wish to thank Prof. Marie-Louise Nosch and the conference organiser Dr. Cecilie Brøns for the invitation to this productive conference. I extend my warmest thanks to Prof. Monica de Cesare, University of Palermo, for entrusting me with the publication of the loom weight material and for all her kind help in collaborative efforts. I am also grateful for her comments on a prior version of this paper, any remaining inconsistencies are my own. My sincere thanks to the director of the Parco archeologico di Segesta, Arch. Sergio Aguglia and his staff, in particular Arch. Antonella Ricotta, for the help received during several research periods at Segesta. My heartfelt thanks also to Dott.ssa Giuseppina Mammina of the Soprintendenza BB.CC.AA. at Trapani. A special thanks to custodian Sig. Salvatore Madonina who participated in the excavations led by Juliette de la Genière in the late 1970s, for taking me to see the excavation trenches. The research was undertaken during a FP7 Marie Curie Fellowship (Grant agreement Nr PIEF-GA-2011-298974) with the project title *West and East. Textile tool technologies and identities in the 1st millennium B.C. South Italy and Cyprus*.

2 See Tusa 1969; Agostiniani 1977; 1984–1985, 193–222; 1988–1989, 167–208; 1999, 1–13; 2006, 683–688; forthcoming; Agostiniani *et al.* 2014 (2015). The term Elymian reflects Thucydides’ (IV. 2; VI. 2, 2–5;) division of the indigenous

peoples of Sicily into Elymian, Sikel and Sikan. However, these entities must be considered fluid as the material culture does not show distinct ethnic differentiations according to geographical limits. For references to Segesta by ancient authors see Ampolo *et al.* 2010.

3 Tusa 1957, 87–89; Tusa 1961. See also de Cesare and Serra 2012, 261.

4 de la Genière 1976–1977. Tusa and de la Genière 1978. See also de Cesare and Serra 2012, 261 and n. 9; 276.

5 de la Genière 1976–77; 1988; 1997; de Cesare 2014, 161; de Cesare and Serra 2012.

6 Under the direction and edited by Monica de Cesare.

7 de Cesare 2009, 640; 2014, 161; 2015. I thank Monica de Cesare for kindly sending me her text presented at the conference in Innsbruck in 2012 before publication.

8 de Cesare and Serra 2012, 266; de Cesare 2014, 161; 2015.



Figure 10.1. Almost parallelepipedal (praliné-shaped) loom weights. Segesta (Scarico di Grotta Vanella). Photo: H. Landenius Enegren.



Figure 10.2. Almost parallelepipedal (praliné-shaped) loom weights. Segesta (Scarico di Grotta Vanella). Photo: H. Landenius Enegren.

which may suggest ritual banqueting but these could also pertain to a domestic context. Moreover, the finds include unguent holders of polychrome vitreous paste,<sup>9</sup> bronze fibulae,<sup>10</sup> miniature axes,<sup>11</sup> terracotta statuettes both sitting and standing,<sup>12</sup> an ivory pendant portraying a figure with a *polos*,<sup>13</sup> musical instruments (among them fragments of a lyra, to date, a unique find in Sicily),<sup>14</sup> lamps,<sup>15</sup> amber beads,<sup>16</sup> as well as animal bones,<sup>17</sup> inscribed sherds of a dedicatory nature or with formulas of possession<sup>18</sup> and more than a thousand loom weights.<sup>19</sup>

The material in the deposit refers to consecutive dumping at various points in time during the course of several centuries, from the 7th century to the last decades of the 5th century BCE.<sup>20</sup> No consistent stratigraphy of the deposit was established, although de la Genière, from the recovered ash strata, tentatively, distinguished a stratigraphic sequence for

the lower parts.<sup>21</sup> As mentioned, it is likely that the primary context for the Grotta Vanella deposit was an area located on the north acropolis from which the material was dumped onto the steep eastern slope.

To date, architectural remains consistent with an Archaic date which could relate to a sanctuary located within this hypothetical area are non-existent. However, material finds recovered in soundings undertaken on the summit concur with similar finds in the deposit itself.<sup>22</sup> Subsequent extensive rebuilding on the north acropolis may have destroyed all evidence of any earlier constructions. There also exists the possibility of an open-air sanctuary.<sup>23</sup> However, it must be stressed that this is strictly hypothetical. Although certain categories of finds recovered from the deposit may suggest a sacred sphere, one cannot exclude that the material comes from a domestic area on the Monte Barbaro.

The more than a thousand loom weights recovered from the deposit invite reflections on textile production in antiquity within diverse contexts and for different purposes. Loom weights and spindle whorls are most often the only remaining evidence in the archaeological record of textile production. Loom weights provided tension to the warp threads, necessary for optimal weaving on a warp-weighted loom. The looms were made of organic material and are thus very seldom preserved unless optimal environmental conditions have prevailed.<sup>24</sup>

9 de Cesare 2014, 161; 2015.

10 de Cesare 2015.

11 de Cesare 2014, 160, n. 5.

12 de Cesare 2009, 647.

13 de Cesare 2014, 160.

14 de Cesare 2014, 161–163, esp. 162 and n. 4.

15 de Cesare 2009, 641.

16 de Cesare 2014, 161.

17 de Cesare 2009, 644, n. 81.

18 Agostiniani 1977; 1984–1985; 1988–1989; 1999; 2006; forthcoming; Agostiniani *et al.* 2014 (2015).

19 To date, an inventory of the finds in the store rooms at Segesta suggests that the actual number is close to 1400 loom weights. For a case study relevant to c. 600 of these, see Landenius Enegren 2015.

20 de Cesare 2009, 640.

21 de la Genière 1978, 48, n. 1.

22 de Cesare 2012, 261, n. 12 with reference to D’Andria 1997 and Molinari 1997. See Parra 2006 for the Segestan *agora* with a focus on the Hellenistic architecture.

23 For ritual aspects of Archaic Sicily see Öhlinger 2015.

24 A loom was recovered at Entella (Parra 1995, 18–19) and in Zone D at Mozia. The latter was found together with about 70 loom weights in *Ambiente D* (Nigro 2007, 45).



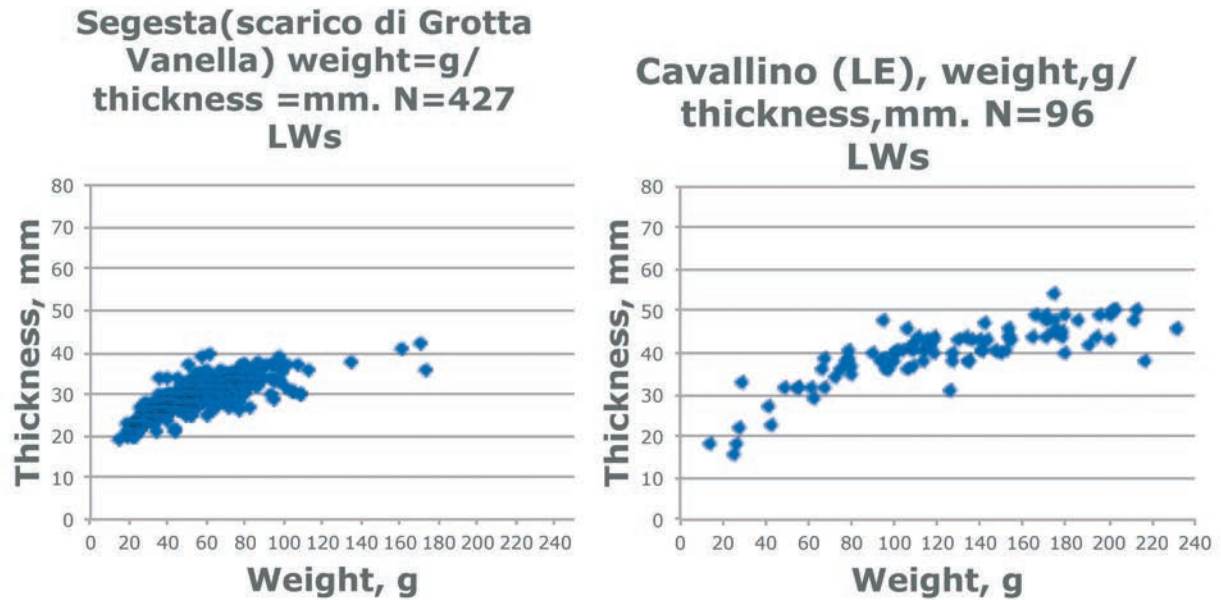


Figure 10.3. Chart showing weight and thickness distributions of loom weights recovered at Segesta (Grotta Vanella) and at Cavallino (LE). © Landenius Enegren

To date, c. 600 loom weights of fired clay unearthed in the deposit have been examined and assigned inventory numbers and registered with the database program using Microsoft Access, as established by the Danish National Research Foundation's Centre for Textile Research (CTR) at the University of Copenhagen.<sup>25</sup> The majority of the loom weights belongs to the truncated pyramidal type but borders on the parallelepipedal. The shape concerned is quite distinctive and is neither absolutely truncated pyramidal nor exactly parallelepipedal, (the lower base dimensions are slightly larger than those of the top face), I have rather frivolously minted the term *praliné*-shaped for the loom weights that show this particular shape, since the shape is reminiscent of a certain type of confectionary (Fig. 10.1, 10.2, 10.4). The particular shape of loom weight has in other studies been referred to as “Elymi” tapered,<sup>26</sup> and sometimes as parallelepipedal and/or cubic in others.<sup>27</sup> However, the material from the deposit includes also “true” parallelepipedal loom weights with parallel sides that have the same dimensions with respect to the ones that are more “pseudo parallelepipedal” and which have here been given the working label of “*praliné*-shaped”. In the Grotta Vanella loom weight material, thus far studied, there are very few loom weights pertaining to other types/shapes such as truncated conical, conical or the purely pyramidal.



Figure 10.4. Loom weight with a painted St. Andrew's cross. Photo: H. Landenius Enegren.

Overall, the loom weights are very well preserved. Of the c. 600 loom weights documented to date, more than 400 are complete and many show only small fragments missing. It must be noted that the 600 loom weights constitute only a part of the entire loom weight material, thus as the research proceeds the following observations may need to be modified. The scatter chart shows the weight and thickness based on the

25 [http://ctr.hum.ku.dk/tools/toolsreports/General\\_\\_introduction.pdf](http://ctr.hum.ku.dk/tools/toolsreports/General__introduction.pdf). Andersson Strand and Nosch 2015.

26 Balco and Kolb 2009, 178.

27 Quercia and Foxhall 2014, 97.



Table 10.1. Calculations for potential loom set-ups with loom weight SG 10990.

| Loom weight no. SG 10990/137: calculated weight 50g, thickness 30mm |                 |                  |                  |                  |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|
|                                                                     | A               | B                | C                |                  |
| Warp threads requiring                                              | 5g warp tension | 10g warp tension | 20g warp tension | 30g warp tension |
| Number of warp threads per LW                                       | 10              | 5                | 2.5              | 1–2              |
| Number of warp threads per 2 LWs<br>(one in front and one in back)  | 20              | 10               | 5                | 2–4              |
| Warp threads per cm                                                 | 6               | 3                | 1–2              | 1                |
| Evaluation of suitability                                           | Choice          | Unlikely         | Unlikely         | Unlikely         |

427 complete loom weights (Fig. 10.3). The chart demonstrates a concentration of weights within a very narrow range of thickness and weight ratio; between 30 and 80 grams in weight and a 20 and 40 mm in thickness and the smallest weights lie within a weight of 19 g and are 18 mm thick. If the loom weights derived from a settlement context where a production of a range of fabric qualities existed to meet different demands, loom weights showing a wider range of both weight and thickness would be expected, as is the case, for instance, at another site studied by the present author, Cavallino, an Archaic settlement site, outside Lecce, in the Salento area of Apulia. Here as shown to the right in Fig. 10.4 the loom weight material shows a range of weight and thickness ratios indicative of a broad textile quality production.<sup>28</sup>

The scatter charts demonstrate the very narrow range of fabric that could have been produced with the Grotta Vanella weights and in consequence, the question arises if they in fact functioned as loom weights or if they were manufactured for other purposes, such as votive, for instance. Use wear is noticeable on the majority of the c. 600 loom weights thus far examined, visibly mostly around the lower corners and lower and/or side edges and also around the suspension hole, testifying to their use in weaving.

To examine the suitability of the loom weights, potential loom set-ups with reference to three chosen loom weights are presented in Tables 10.1–10.3, with a thread/yarn needing a warp tension of 5, 10, 20 and 30 grams respectively. The individual samples of loom weights were chosen from an upper, middle and lower weight range and the potential set-ups adhere to the standards used in the CTR Technical reports using the parameters based on weight/thickness classes.<sup>29</sup>

The potential set-ups reveal that the weights were used in the production of finer quality fabric where the warp threads needed no more than 5 or 10 grams of tension. The

Table 10.2. Calculations for potential loom set-ups with loom weight SG 9914/41.

| Loom weight no. SG 9914/41 calculated weight 161g, thickness 41mm  |                  |                  |                  |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|
|                                                                    | A                | B                | C                |
| Warp threads requiring                                             | 10g warp tension | 20g warp tension | 30g warp tension |
| Number of warp threads per LW                                      | 16               | 8                | 5                |
| Number of warp threads per 2 LWs<br>(one in front and one in back) | 32               | 16               | 10               |
| Warp threads per cm                                                | 7–8              | 3–4              | 2                |
| Evaluation of suitability                                          | Choice           | Possible         | Unlikely         |

Table 10.3. Calculations for potential loom set-ups with loom weight SG 10991/38.

| Loom weight no. SG 10991/38 calculated weight 19g, thickness 21mm |                  |                  |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------|------------------|
|                                                                   | A                | B                |
| Warp threads requiring                                            | 10g warp tension | 20g warp tension |
| Number of warp threads per LW                                     | 1–2              | -                |
| Number of warp threads per 2 LWs (one in front and one in back)   | 2–4              | -                |
| Warp threads per cm                                               | 2                | -                |
| Evaluation of suitability                                         | Unlikely         | -                |

28 I wish to thank Professor D’Andria, Università del Salento, Lecce for kindly giving me permission to study the loom weight material at Cavallino.

29 See [http://ctr.hum.ku.dk/tools/toolsreports/General\\_introduction.pdf](http://ctr.hum.ku.dk/tools/toolsreports/General_introduction.pdf). See also Mårtensson *et al.* 2009; Andersson Strand and Nosch 2015.

sample using a “miniaturistic” loom weight (Table 10.3) shows that it was not optimal for weaving on a warp-weighted loom. Replicas of these minute loom weights with a weight between 18 and 25 grams and a thickness between 19 and 22 were hand-fashioned by the present



Fig. 10.5 Detail of a silk dress probably inspired by French manufacture, 18th century CE. Uggiano-la Chiesa (LE), Italy. Photo: H. Landenius Enegren with kind permission from the Archdiocese of Otranto, per litteras 30.3. 2017. © Archdiocese Otranto.

author at *Sagnlandet – The Land of Legends, Centre for Historical-Archaeological Research and Communication* in Denmark, and tested in tablet weaving for the production of thin c.1 cm wide bands in which the threads were kept taut by the light weights.<sup>30</sup> The tablet-woven Viking bands recovered at Birka come foremost to mind as a visual comparison.<sup>31</sup> The experiment does not prove such a usage for these “miniaturistic” loom weights, but only shows that it is a promising possibility. Tablet weaving in the Archaic period in Italy is attested to at the site of Verucchio where tablet woven cloth was discovered,<sup>32</sup> and recently

also at Ripacandida in Basilicata,<sup>33</sup> lending support to the hypothesis that tablet weaving existed also in Sicily in this period. The samples used in the potential loom set-ups in Tables 10.1 and 10.2 suggest a very fine fabric with a warp count of maximum 7–8 threads per cm.

More than half of the loom weights recorded to date are decorated with a painted so-called St. Andrew’s cross, on one or more of the lateral sides without suspension hole and on the top surface (Fig. 10.4). Only exceptionally does painted marking occur on the base. I suspect that the number of painted loom weights overall is much higher since some weights are covered with a thick patina that, in many cases, resists cleaning and thus impairs closer inspection. In the cases where cleaning was possible, slight traces of a St. Andrew’s cross was revealed on many loom weights which, initially, were deemed free of decoration. This decorative aspect on loom weights, if indeed decorative rather than functional, or both, is a topic that merits an in-depth discussion outside the scope of the present contribution. Suffice it here to say that several possibilities come to mind, for instance a specific mark on a loom weight could serve as a weaving aid, indicating to the weaver, the position on the warp at which an in-weave was to be inserted, as an indication of personal possession or as a distinguishing mark of manufacture.<sup>34</sup> The main type of decoration on the Grotta Vanella loom weights is a painted St. Andrew’s cross and thus far, only rarely do other incised or impressed or painted marks occur. The final publication will offer a detailed analysis. In the present context it is pertinent to consider if perhaps this specific decoration had significance in a sacred context. Loom weights with this specific type of painted decoration have been recovered at other sites in Sicily, to name a few, at Mozia, Erice, Entella, Selinunte and Monte Maranfusa. In the material I have studied at Monte Iato one loom weight with a secure Archaic context has this decoration. Finds at Segesta of painted decoration on the indigenous *ceramica dipinta* pottery of Western Sicily shows similarity in the technical rendering of brush strokes. However, the specific St Andrew’s cross motif is not found frequently on this type of pottery but it does occur, for instance on jug handles or in the interior part of vases.<sup>35</sup>

The restricted range of weight and thickness ratio of the loom weights, thus far studied, appears very delimited to pertain to a household textile production which would in all probability have involved varying qualities and

30 I thank Eva Andersson Strand of CTR for kindly suggesting this idea and helping me to test the replicas. I also thank potter Inger Hildebrandt of the Sagnlandet – The Land of Legends, Centre for Historical-Archaeological Research and Communication, Lejre, Denmark for her expertise and kind advice.

31 Andersson 2003.

32 Ræder Knudsen 2012.

33 In course of publication by the present author jointly with M. Gleba, C. Heitz, and F. Meo.

34 For a discussion of the usage see Rutschmann 1985; Ferrandini Troisi 1986; Quercia and Foxhall 2012; 2014, 96.

35 I kindly thank Dr. Alfonsa Serra for this information (personal communication 8.2.2016).

been produced with diverse end-uses in mind. As such, the loom weight material would indirectly support the idea of the Grotta Vanella finds deriving from a primary sacred context, as originally proposed by de la Genière and recently also underpinned by de Cesare.<sup>36</sup> However, as no evidence exists for a cultic structure located on the north acropolis of Segesta, this still remains hypothetical. The comprehensive publication of all finds will hopefully provide more information. The loom weights are but one set of data in a rich deposit of material which may in the end pertain to diverse primary contexts including both the domestic and the sacred.

The evidence for actual on-site weaving in sanctuary contexts is rather limited;<sup>37</sup> The famous *peplos* woven for Athena Polias by the *arrephoroi* comes foremost to mind.<sup>38</sup> When large amounts of loom weights are unearthed at defined sanctuary sites this is deemed indicative of production within a sanctuary context.<sup>39</sup> In this respect the more than a thousand loom weights recovered at the site of Grotta Vanella at Segesta would certainly lend support to the idea of a sacred context for this material. The loom weights suggest a production of very fine textiles with thin warp threads which, hypothetically, could be consistent with the dressing of a cult statue with fine quality cloth, or, alternatively, the production of decorative bands or ribbons. A domestic context however, can never be excluded.

De la Genière suggested Aphrodite as a likely candidate for a deity,<sup>40</sup> the goddess was worshipped both at Monte Iato where a temple dedicated to Aphrodite shows traces of an earlier sanctuary already in use when the Late Archaic House there was built<sup>41</sup> and at Erice, another “Elymian” settlement, where Aphrodite was later venerated,<sup>42</sup> but it remains a hypothesis.

## Conclusion

The loom weight material recovered in the Grotta Vanella deposit may refer to a sacred origin, at the very least, it shows that the loom weights were used to produce particularly fine quality cloth, as their weight and thickness ratio refers to warp thread needing a tension of only 5 or 10 grams. Whether this entailed a specialised production involving the weaving of sacred cloth for a cult figure within a sanctuary context or cloth for votive purposes, we can only speculate. It is also possible that the loom weights themselves, were ultimately dedicated as votive gifts, the use-wear stresses, however, that this was not their primary function and a conclusive votive connection rather than a domestic one is not possible to determine.

As to the possibility of the existence of a sanctuary on the north acropolis of Segesta for which, to date, no structural remains have been found, remains attractive, but hypothetical.<sup>43</sup> The ongoing study and publication of all the material will throw more light on the deposit as a whole.

During the brushing of the loom weights to remove dirt, an inscription was disclosed on one of them,<sup>44</sup> the inscription in the Selinuntine variant of the Greek alphabet, but in an indigenous idiom, is the first “Elymian” inscription to appear within the last decade. The inscription would tentatively underpin the view of a sacred primary context for the Grotta Vanella material although a domestic sphere can never be ruled out. The inscription in which some of the letters reading from left to right are damaged, may express an invocation.<sup>45</sup>

Some of the loom weight material may have been used for the fashioning of a cult dress, or in the production of cloth as votive gifts. If fine quality cloth was used for this purpose, the weight and thickness parameters of the loom weights, as demonstrated, could be consistent with such a production. It must be stressed that this remains a hypothesis, as concrete evidence is, indeed, lacking.

From an anthropological perspective, the tradition of a cult dress continues to this day. In many areas of South Italy and Sicily during the festivities to celebrate the local town saints, the image of the saint is carried in a procession dressed in fine clothes. An example of an exceptionally fine quality dress used in the past to adorn the image of Santa

36 de Cesare 2014; de Cesare and Serra 2012. However, they emphasize that a domestic origin for the material cannot be entirely ruled out.

37 For a discussion see Gleba 2008, 184–187; Gleba 2009; Meyers 2013, 267–268. See also this volume.

38 See Neils 1992; 2001, 23 and Mansfield 1985, 260; Brøns 2016.

39 Gleba 2008, 181. See also Gleba 2009 for a discussion of loom weights in votive contexts, as foundation deposits and in sanctuary textile workshops. An early attestation of possible evidence for weaving within a sacred context is at the site of Francavilla Marittima in Calabria (Kleibrink 2003). Later examples in Italy include the Heraion at Foce del Sele and the sanctuary of Santa Venera at Paestum (see Gleba 2009, 79–80 for a discussion and further ref.) See also Meyers 2013.

40 de la Genière 1976–1977; 1978.

41 See for instance Kistler *et al.* 2013.

42 Guido 1967, 73–76; Acquario *et al.* 2010.

43 It must be kept in mind that any inferences drawn on cult buildings of the *capanna sacello* type with baldachin structures are purely hypothetical as no structures have been found to support such a conjecture. For types of sanctuaries in archaic Sicily see Öhlinger 2015.

44 I thank student helper Niels Peder Møldrup for his vigilant eyes and for the energetic brushing that led to this fortuitous discovery.

45 For a detailed analysis of the inscription, archaeological context and loom weight see Agostiniani *et al.* 2014 (2015), esp. p. 66 for lettering and morphemes.



Maria Maddalena on the occasion of the annual festive day dedicated to the saint (July 21st), in the small town of Uggiano-la-Chiesa in the Salento region of Apulia comes to mind (Fig. 10.5). The origin of the dress and how it came to this small town is not known, but the dress probably dates to the mid-18th century of our Common Era, made of silk with exquisite silver thread work, it is undoubtedly inspired by French manufacture.<sup>46</sup> Now restored and displayed in the local parish museum, it provides both testimony to a long tradition and to the importance of textiles in a sacred context.

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46 Barbone Pugliese and Pettinau Vescina 2012, 22–23.



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## Loom weights in sacred contexts: The Square Building of the Heraion near the Sele River

*Bianca Ferrara and Francesco Meo<sup>1</sup>*

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The Square Building is one of the most interesting archaeological contexts discovered in the Sanctuary of Hera near the mouth of the Sele River (Figs. 11.1–11.2). It has long been a source of inspiration for scholarly reflection and academic debate.

The present study has two objectives. Firstly, it seeks to contribute to the ongoing recontextualisation of the monuments in the sanctuary<sup>2</sup> on the basis of archive documents and materials for which no description has yet been published. Regarding the Square Building in particular, the two deposits found during the excavations begun by Paola Zancani in the 1950s are of special relevance.<sup>3</sup> The second objective is to use new methods to investigate the many loom weights found in the building, in order to enrich the scientific debate and verify the various hypotheses concerning the function of this peculiar building.<sup>4</sup>

The Square Building lies a short distance from the centre of the sanctuary, about 80 m beyond the two altars (Fig. 11.3). It was built over a large, funnel-shaped pit, larger than the building itself, which served as its foundation. Its contents, consisting of compact earth mixed with chips of sandstone, yielded abundant votive material from different areas of the sanctuary. It is this material that P. Zancani and M.W. Stoop called the “first deposit”, regarding it as a reliable *terminus post quem* for the construction of the building,<sup>5</sup> whose perimeter walls rested directly on its upper surface. The deposit also contained three large sandstone blocks, clearly reused, which turned out to be splendidly carved Archaic metopes picturing the myth of Sisyphus, the suicide of Ajax, and the fight between Heracles and the giant Alcyoneus.<sup>6</sup> This discovery called into question Krauss’s previous reconstruction of the late Archaic frieze of the so-called *thesauros*.<sup>7</sup>

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1 Bianca Ferraro is the main author of the sections on the context and architecture while Francesco Meo is the main author of the loom weight analysis.

2 Votive wells: Ferrara 2009; Archaic deposit: Franco in press; *hestiatorion*: Ferrara *et al.* in press.

3 Zancani and Stoop 1965–1966, 23–195; Greco 1995; Greco 1996, 263–282; Greco 2003, 103–122.

4 Greco 2003, 103–122; Greco 2010, 587; Greco 2012, 211–216.

5 Zancani and Stoop 1965–1966; Greco 2003, 103–122; Greco 2010, 587; Greco 2012, 211–216.

6 Zancani 1964, 57–95.

7 During the excavations of the 1930s, 33 carved Archaic metopes were found in the area of the sanctuary. Originally these metopes were linked to the so-called *thesauros*, at that time considered the most ancient building in the sacred area and re-constructed as a prostyle tetrastyle temple. The discoveries in the 1950s of another six metopes in the foundation of the Square Building disproved this initial hypothesis. Recent excavations have demonstrated that the so-called *thesauros* is a small Roman *sacellum*: *Heraion II; Santuario di Hera alla foce del Sele* 2010.

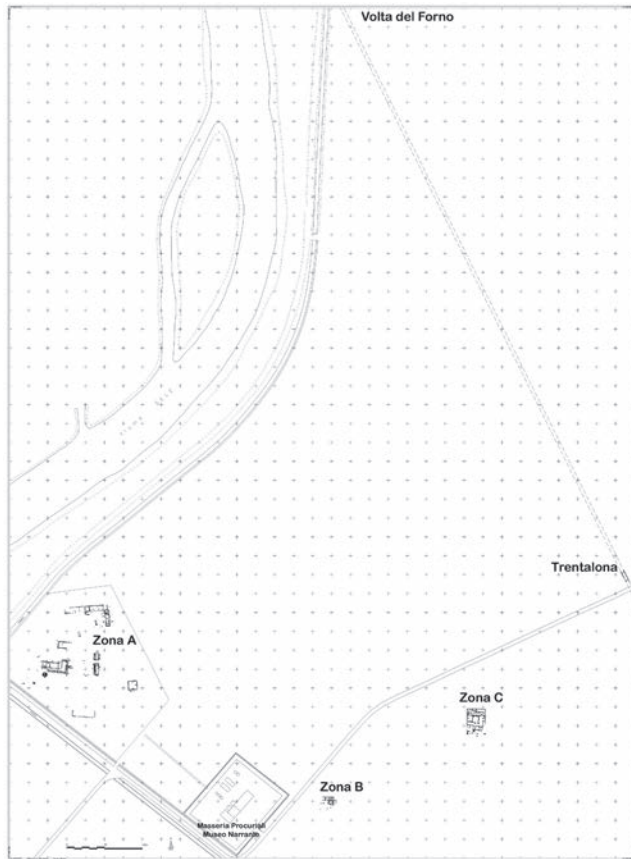


Figure 11.1. Sanctuary of Hera in the Foce del Sele area. Department of the Humanities, University of Naples Federico II, author P. Cifone.

The Square Building was probably destroyed by a fire, traces of which can still be seen on blocks of the perimeter walls. It was only later that a pit containing the “second deposit” was dug inside it. The edges of this pit can clearly be distinguished at the level of the first course of blocks of the building. The building was stripped of its materials and abandoned, subsequently being covered by layers of ash that accumulated after the eruption of Vesuvius in 79 CE. Another major disturbance of all the strata occurred in the 3rd century CE, when the area was reused for *enchytrismos* burials in the internal levels of the structure.<sup>8</sup>

Inside the building, a small patch of earth near the east wall – 1.50 sq m in area and about 0.40/0.50 m deep – still retained an intact stratigraphic sequence, which allowed the two different deposits to be identified.

Paola Zancani dated the “first deposit” to a period between the 6th century BCE and about 430 BCE, and the second one, of which the material is fairly homogeneous, to a period between 370/360 and 270/260 BCE. The building, she argued, was destroyed at the time of the foundation of the Latin colony in 273 BCE. Zancani believed that the building was used to store the treasure of Hera, given the many coins

found here, and that it was mainly frequented by women. The latter deduction was based on the materials found, which were related to the female world (loom weights, *lebetes gamikoi*, *lekythoi*, ring *askoi*, bottles, perfume containers). The presence of so many loom weights, she argued, is partly explicable by their dual use as scale weights.<sup>9</sup>

In 1995, Giovanna Greco put forward a new, original interpretation of the monument, arguing that it was rather a cult building where the daughters of the local aristocracy spent a period of isolation in preparation for marriage, during which they wove the goddess’s *peplos* (Fig. 11.4). On the basis of the floor plan and the analysis of Greek literary sources that refer to the custom of weaving a garment in many Greek sanctuaries, such as for Athena Polias in Athens, Hera in Olympia and Argos and for Apollo in Amyklai, as described by Pausanias,<sup>10</sup> Greco concluded that the loom weights could not have been votive gifts, much less scale weights. She proposed the presence of at least three middle-sized looms, of the vertical, wall-mounted type, which the girls used to weave the cloth to deck out the statue of the goddess during the yearly festivals.<sup>11</sup>

She also argued that the large funnel-shaped pit on which the building rests is an example of one of the many drainage systems frequently used by the builders of sanctuaries to harden the ground so that monuments could be erected upon it. She pointed out that it served as the foundation of the entire building. Along with the foundation trenches of the perimeter walls, it served to dry out the muddy, damp, marshy soil.<sup>12</sup>

Emanuele Greco also analysed this building, suggesting instead that it was a sort of square *oikos pyrgos*, a female place of worship associated with domestic management. On the basis of well-known comparisons with other similar buildings in ancient Greece, he hypothesised that it was used for storing goods and equipment, including weights and measures, and that only women entered and lived in it.<sup>13</sup> On the basis of the objects found in the “first deposit”, he concluded that the building was built in the late 5th or early 4th century BCE.

## The Square Building in the Sanctuary of Hera near the Sele River

### *Reinterpreting an archaeological context (BF)*

The votive materials contained in the so-called “first deposit” come from various buildings in the sanctuary, which were periodically cleaned and stripped of excess gifts. Since the

9 Zancani and Stoop 1965–1966, 60–64.

10 Paus. 3.16.2; Paus. 6.24.10.

11 Greco 1995, 99.

12 Greco 2003, 103–122; Greco 2012, 211–216.

13 Greco 1996, 270.

8 Zancani and Stoop 1965–1966, 35.



Figure 11.2. Sanctuary of Hera at the Sele River. Area A. The Square Building is marked in red. Department of Humanities, University of Naples Federico II, author P. Cifone.

gifts nevertheless remained sacred, they were buried inside the sanctuary, in a pit which would then serve as the base of a new building. Their burial probably involved a closing rite similar to the ones recorded elsewhere in the sacred area. As to the “second deposit”, the votive materials found in it can be ascribed to the phase when the building was in use. They, too, were ritually buried when the building was abandoned. These two disposals of votive material thus mark the beginning and end of the life of the Square Building, these moments being datable with reference to the black-glaze ware that was found there.

In order to date the different phases of use of the Square Building, the first step in this study was to re-examine the materials which had come to light during Zancani’s excavation. Most notably, the context of the materials stored in various wooden boxes was reconstructed, despite the lack of any surviving information concerning their specific stratigraphic provenance other than Zancani and Stoop’s distinction between materials from the “first” and “second” deposits. Some boxes of materials from the Square Building for which no descriptions had been published, which in some cases had never even been examined, were also found.



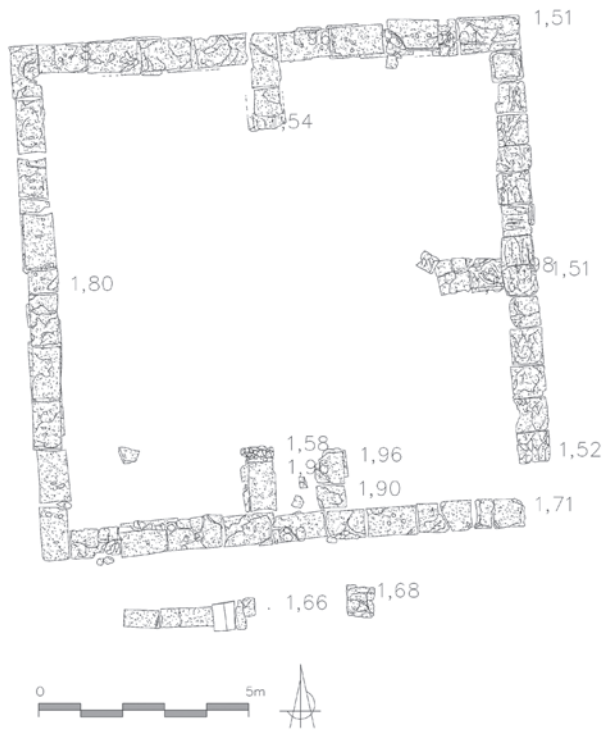


Figure 11.3. The Square Building in the Sanctuary of Hera at the Sele River. Department of Humanities, University of Naples Federico II, author P. Cifone.

The re-examination of the black-glaze ware found in the sanctuary allowed us to put together a homogeneous, consistent corpus, in many cases accompanied by stratigraphic data, making it possible to come up with a more accurate chronology (Fig. 11.5). When considered within this frame of reference, the black-glaze ware found in the Square Building prompts both functional and chronological considerations that deviate from what has been argued so far.<sup>14</sup>

The “first deposit”, *i.e.* the contents of the large drainage pit dug before the monument was built, yielded a conspicuous amount of Archaic and Classical pottery.<sup>15</sup> Black-glaze ware datable to the period between the late 6th and first half of the 4th centuries BCE is especially abundant.<sup>16</sup> The heterogeneity of this material clearly reflects the mixed character of the deposit, which was created by gathering

all the no-longer used materials from the buildings of the sanctuary and mixing these materials with clay, rock chips and earth, on the one hand to create a solid foundation for the new building and on the other to provide a fitting burial for the votive gifts. The “first deposit” is dated to the period between the late 6th and the first half of the 4th centuries BCE, rather than 430 BCE as argued by Zancani. This later date is based on the black-glaze ware found here, which is datable to the late 5th and first half of the 4th centuries BCE.

The “second deposit”, *i.e.* the deposit created at the time when the building was abandoned, yielded material predominantly dating from the building’s period of use. This is true of the many examples of Paestan red-figure pottery.<sup>17</sup> The black-glaze ware indicates that the building was still in use late in the 3rd century BCE, and very probably even in the early decades of the second, since the most recent black-glaze vessels date from the latter period.<sup>18</sup> The range of pottery includes ninety lekythoid unguent bottles and eighty pear-shaped ones dated to the mid-3rd and 2nd centuries BCE (Fig. 11.6a).

A number of objects bear witness to the everyday life of the building, including bronze door studs and tool handles,<sup>19</sup> abundant gold jewellery (Fig. 11.6b–c)<sup>20</sup> and ivory and amber fragments.<sup>21</sup> The carved bone, two branches of coral and numerous coins (Fig. 11.6d) can all be ascribed to the “first deposit”.

The published descriptions of these materials have recently been supplemented by the identification of objects in the Paestum Museum storerooms that had been neither

17 Including especially abundant and remarkable *stamnoi/lebetes* and *lebetes gamikoi*, *lekythoi*, *lekanai*, and in general all the vessels clearly alluding to the *gamos* and the female world.

18 Among the open forms, there is a prevalence of series 4380 and 4370 *skyphoi*, skyphoid *pyxides*, Morel series 4264 and 3121 double-handled cups, Morel series 4710 *lekanai*, Morel series 6230 small one-handled cups, 2430, 2423 and 2420 concave-convex small cups, 2733 and 2730 small cups, 1550, 2672, 2671, 2610/2670, 2914, 2910/2980 and 2150 cups, and 2230, 2283, 1310/1550, 1514, 1510, 1520 and 1635 *paterae*. These vases were certainly used in everyday life by the daughters of the Lucanian nobility, who presumably spent the period of preparation for marriage here. This is confirmed by the many closed forms found here, especially *lekythoi* (Morel series 5410, 5414, 5432, 5440, 5441, 5443 and 5473) and bottles (7131), which were traditionally used for scented unguents or oils.<sup>18</sup> Closed forms also include *oinochoai* (5634, 5644 and 5740), amphorae (3640), *epichyseis* (5772 and 5770), jugs (5343), containers (4821), ring vases and *stamnoi* (4430 and 4460).

19 Zancani and Stoop 1965–1966, 148–151; Giacco 2010, 667–683.

20 Zancani and Stoop 1965–1966, 161–163; Franco in press.

21 Zancani and Stoop 1965–1966, 27–37, 171; Cantilena 2010, 729.

14 Ferrara 2013, 251–255.

15 Zancani and Stoop 1965–1966, 106–107; Visco 2010, 605–622.

16 It includes Bloesch C *kylikes*, Wiener or Vicup *kylikes*, plain rim or bolsal *kylikes*, *skyphoi*, type-C *skyphoi*, Morel series 4380 *skyphoi*, and, among the closed forms, partially painted small *olpettes* and *pelikai* and Morel series 5416 *lekythoi*.

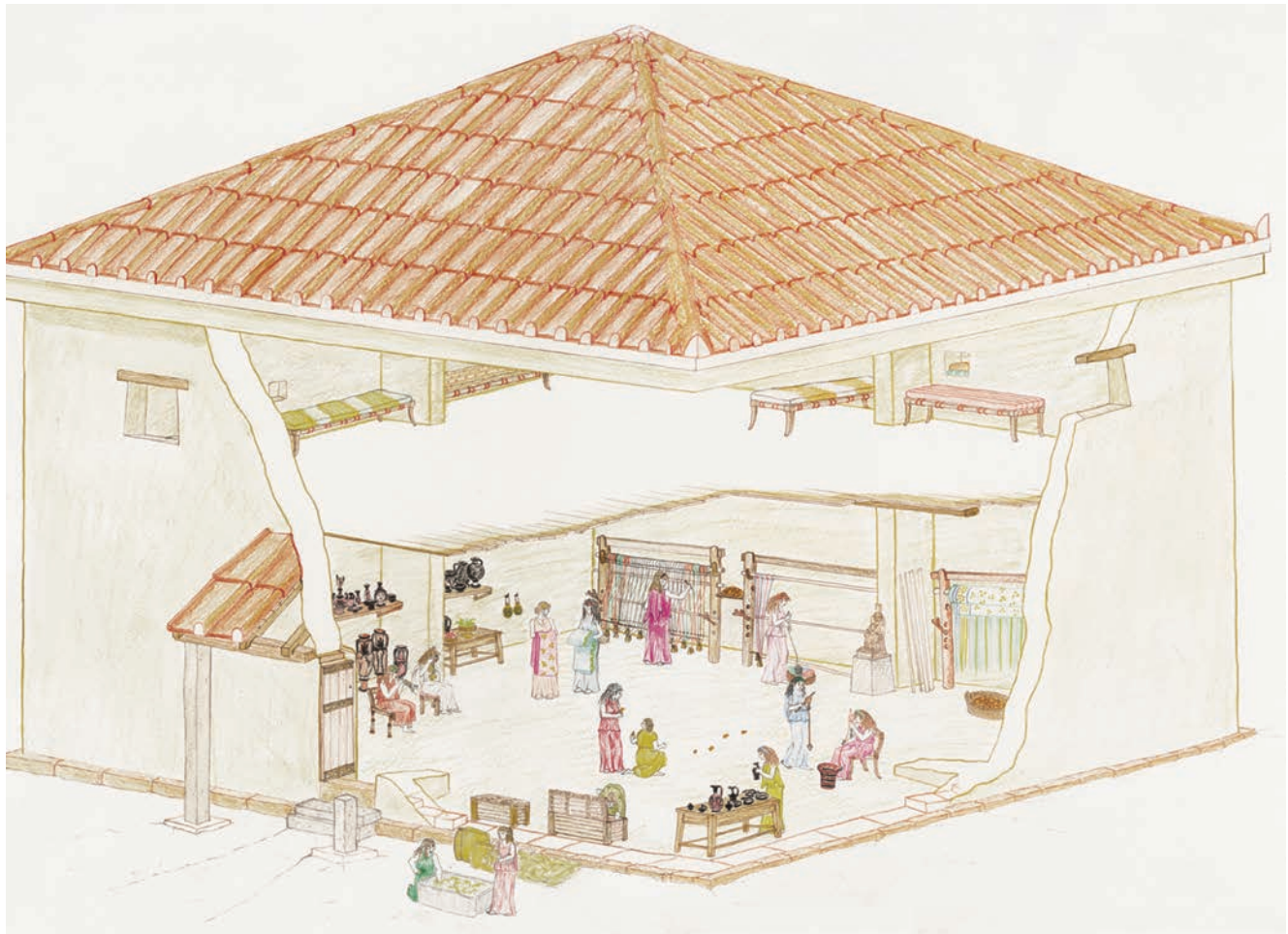


Figure 11.4. Hypothetical reconstruction of the weaving activities in the Square Building. Department of the Humanities, University of Naples Federico II, author M. Pierobon.

inventoried nor studied by Zancani and Stoop in their initial study of the monument. These materials, which are still being restored, can be ascribed, with a significant degree of certitude, to the “second deposit”. They mostly include black-glaze ware from the first half of the 3rd century BCE.<sup>22</sup> Overall these materials do not differ from those already found in the building, and thus confirm its function. The 272 loom weights (Fig. 11.6e), which Zancani had subdivided into seven groups on the basis of weight, are especially significant for the purposes of the present study.<sup>23</sup>

These votive materials were buried when the building was erected and when it was abandoned. While the materials from the first pit come from several buildings in the sanctuary and thus bear witness to rites held in the sacred

area as a whole, those from the second pit are specifically linked to activities performed inside the Square Building.

The chronological relationship between the “first” and the “second” deposits cannot be precisely determined. The presence of black-glaze ware dating from the first half of the 4th century BCE – when the presence of new arrivals, the Lucani, is manifested in the sanctuary – suggests that the building was erected in this period rather than in the late 5th century BCE.

The graph (Fig. 11.7) shows the chronologically ordered frequencies of materials in the two deposits, indicating a peak in the use of the building from the second half of the 4th to the first half of the 3rd centuries BCE, and its gradual abandonment until its definitive destruction in the mid-2nd century BCE.

This study thus provides a reliable picture of the lifespan of the Square Building, and establishes that in contrast to what was stated previously, it was abandoned in the first half of the 2nd century BCE. This means that the destruction of the Square Building did not coincide with the arrival of

<sup>22</sup> This consists of cups, *paterae* and bottles. This pottery is associated with tableware and coarse ware, unguent bottles and *thymateria*.

<sup>23</sup> Zancani and Stoop 1965–1966, 73–82.

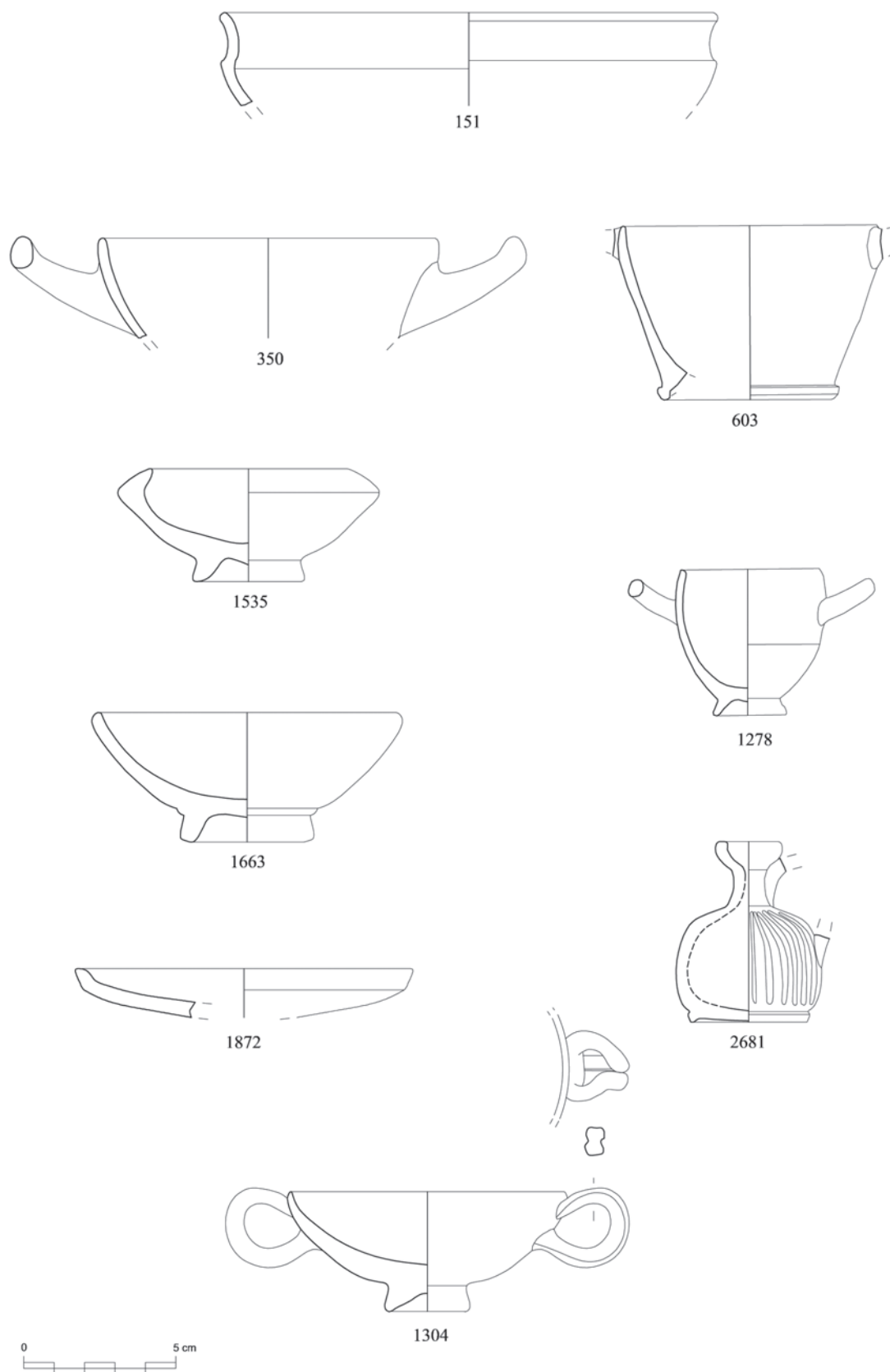


Figure 11.5. Square Building. Black-glaze ware. Department of the Humanities, University of Naples Federico II, author I. Ditrè; editing D. Capece.





Figure 11.6. Square Building. Lekythoid unguent bottles (6a); gold jewellery (6b-c); coins (6d); loom weights (6e); bottles (6f); local figured pottery (6g); marble statue picturing the goddess Hera (6h). Photos: Bianca Ferrara, Marianna Franco, Enzo Passarella.

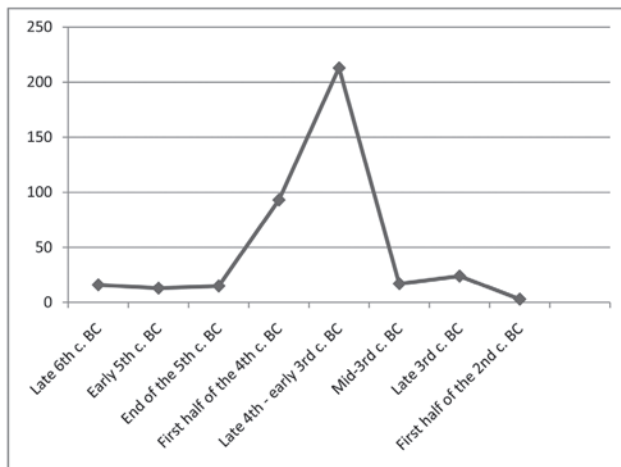


Figure 11.7. Square Building. Graph history. Quantification and chronology of the black-glaze ware. Illustration: Bianca Ferrara.

the Romans in Paestum; on the contrary, the monument very probably lived on even after the Latin colony was established.

The materials from the time when the building was in use largely date from the mid-4th to late 3rd centuries BCE. They provide a significant overview of the vessels used for the consumption of meals or libations. Once again, it is worth distinguishing purely votive objects from those employed for ritual ceremonies or everyday use. This distinction is all the more important when dealing with a building used for complex forms of initiation and participation in a cult.

While many of the vases could be votive gifts, deposited in the sanctuary along with the numerous coins found here, many others must have been used for ceremonies or for everyday needs inside the building (Fig. 11.6g).<sup>24</sup>

The entire complex of materials found inside the building can be ascribed to the female sphere,<sup>25</sup> and the presence of

24 Notably, the *skyphoi*, cups, *paterae*, *pyxides*, *lekythoi*, jugs and bottles, as well as the cooking pots, may have played a role in the consumption of communal meals.

25 Unguent bottles, *lekythoi*, bottles, *lekanai* and *pyxides* are all related to female adornment and body care, used as makeup or jewellery containers.





Figure 11.8. Types of loom weights from the Square Building. Photo: Francesco Meo

locally produced figured pottery suggests that the building was frequented by devotees from the wealthiest strata of Paestan society. These distinctive and non-repetitive forms must indeed have been made specially for specific ceremonies. The building probably hosted the daughters of the Lucanian aristocracy, who spent a period of time here in preparation for marriage, weaving the goddess's cloak and keeping watch over votive gifts, as may be assumed from the materials found when read with reference to the literary sources. However, while it does seem that the building had a prevalently lay function, it is not easy to clearly distinguish the vessels used in rituals from those used for everyday purposes.<sup>26</sup>

In any case, it is the abundance of loom weights that gives the building its distinctive character. Our investigation of these weights and associated cloth production has fully confirmed Giovanna Greco's hypothesis that weaving

was indeed performed in the Square Building, under the protection of the goddess Hera (Fig. 11.6h), who is represented by a small marble statue found here. Perhaps the girls preparing for their weddings could have woven both the clothes worn by the statue and the garments they wore themselves, as attested in many other female sanctuaries in the ancient Greek world.<sup>27</sup>

### ***Loom weights as tools, loom weights as offerings (FM)***<sup>28</sup>

Inside the square building in the Sanctuary of Hera, 272 loom weights were found (Fig. 11.8). They are mostly of

<sup>27</sup> Greco 2013, 15–23.

<sup>28</sup> I would like to thank Prof. G. Greco for the opportunity to study the loom weights of the Square Building by these new methods; B. Ferrara for her help during my work in the museums of

<sup>26</sup> Ferrara 2012, 247–254.

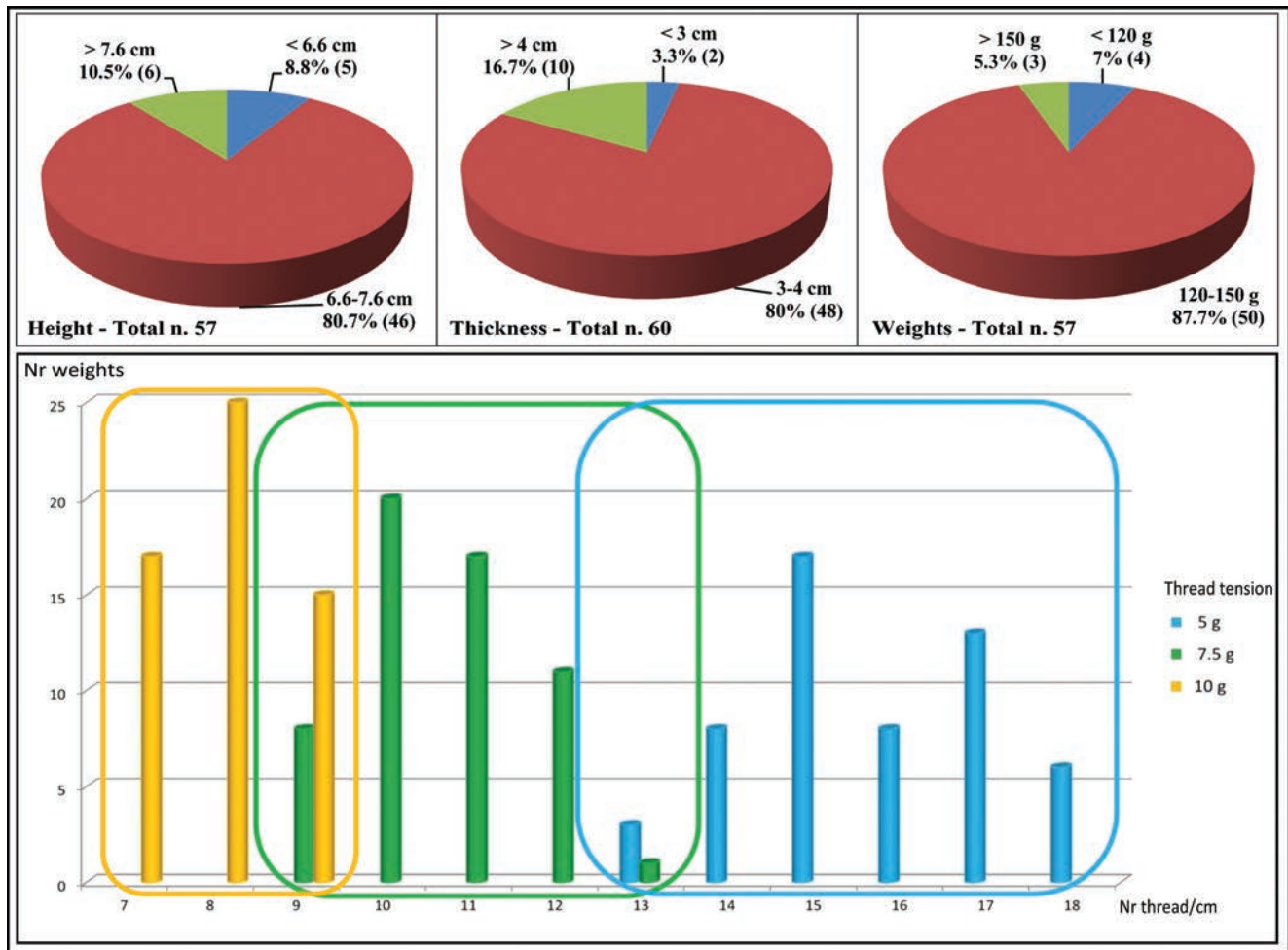


Figure 11.9. Square Building. Dimensions and fabrics from the group of truncated pyramidal weights with two holes. © Francesco Meo.

the truncated-pyramid type (81.2%, 221 samples), followed by the discoid type (18.4%, 50 weights) and a single sample of a pinched weight (0.4%).

All the loom weights were documented and new methods of investigation based on research conducted at the CTR in Copenhagen were applied. These methods now allow us to establish the quality of the fabric produced by analysing the relationship between the weight and thickness of the loom weights: the weight determines how many threads can be attached to it while the thickness establishes their density. The relationship between the two considered dimensions makes it possible to calculate the tension to which the threads were subject in grams. Furthermore, the

most recent developments in these studies enable us to calculate the average thickness of the threads based on the thread tension.<sup>29</sup>

The truncated-pyramid weights can be divided into two sub-types depending on the number of holes: the type with one hole is more numerous than the type with two holes. The latter (60 samples) are of very homogeneous dimensions: the height lies mostly within 6.6 and 7.6 cm, the thickness between 3 and 4 cm and the weight between 120 and 150 g (Fig. 11.9).

An in-depth investigation to establish the type of fabric that would have been produced shows the homogeneity of the warp that was achieved by using these weights, which would have subjected the threads to a tension of between

Paestum and our continued comparisons of the new data; Dr. M. Cipriani and Dr. G. Avagliano, Chief Archaeologists at the National Museum of Paestum for their kind hospitality during my days in the museum; M.-L. Nosch and C. Brøns for arranging a workshop on such an inspiring topic.

<sup>29</sup> Andersson Strand 2012; Andersson Strand 2013; Andersson Strand 2014. This method has been used in other Southern Italian archaeological contexts since 2011: Meo 2013; Meo 2014a; Meo 2014b; Meo 2014c; Meo 2015.

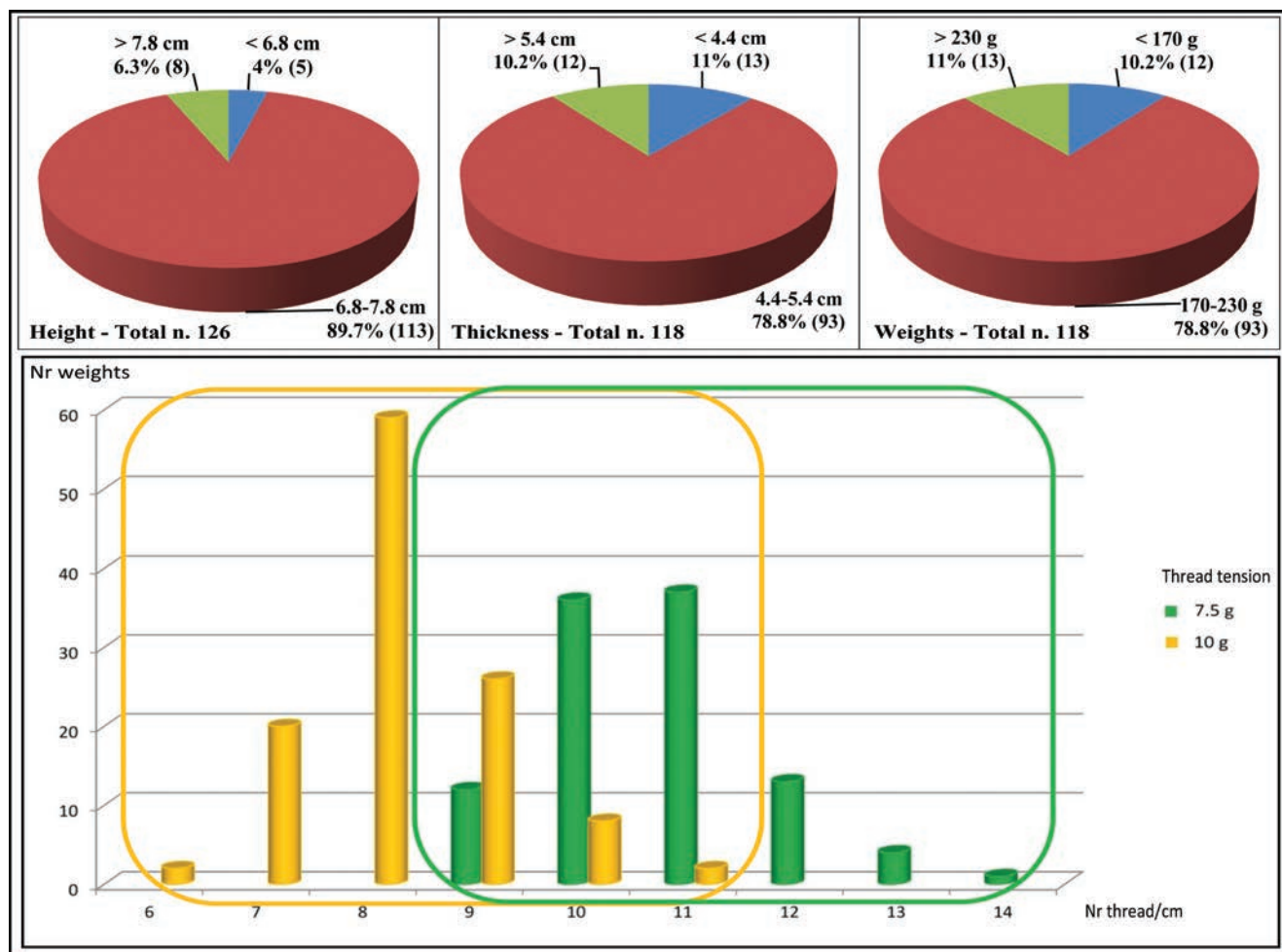


Figure 11.10. Square Building. Dimensions and fabrics from the group A of truncated pyramidal weights with one hole. © Francesco Meo.

5 and 10 g. The average thickness of the threads would thus not have been greater than 0.2 mm.<sup>30</sup> Nevertheless,

<sup>30</sup> Comparison of these data with what is emerging from the study of mineralised pieces of cloth found in Southern Italian sites began in 2013. This research makes it possible to validate the CTR method as applied to Southern Italian archaeological material as well as to gain significant insight into textile production in the ancient world. The first samples analysed (descriptions in print) come from burials and consist of a fragment of a 2/2 twill, dated to the 8th century BCE, from the site of Incoronata-S. Teodoro, and 11 pieces of different types of cloth dated to the second half of the 6th–beginning of the 4th century BCE from Ripacandida. The former was presented at the conference *The Material Side of Marriage: Female goods and women's economic role in the domestic sphere in Greek, Roman and Byzantine times* (De Siena, A., Gleba, M. and Meo, F., *Tessuti, tessitrici e tombe: nuove prospettive archeologiche sul ruolo della donna nella sfera domestica dell'arco ionico durante l'età del Ferro*) and the

considering the relationship between thread tension and thread density (the number of threads per cm) the best result would have been achieved with a tension of 5 g and a density of 13–18 threads/cm. However, tensions of 7.5 or 10 g cannot be excluded.

The presence of such a homogeneous set with a well-defined number of loom weights confirms the presence of a loom using two-hole truncated-pyramid weights inside the Square Building. Despite the lack of precise excavation data, this homogeneity in weight, dimensions and thread tension is clearly seen in other closed contexts where a loom can be identified, for example the 3rd-century BCE farm of S. Biagio alla Venella.<sup>31</sup> Unless the whole set of loom weights

latter were presented in a poster at the XII North European Symposium for Archaeological Textiles (Heitz, C., Landenius Enegren, H. and Meo, F. *The fabric of Southern Italian Archaic Society. Textiles from Ripacandida, Basilicata*).

<sup>31</sup> Meo 2015, ch. 4.4.

represents a single offering, this striking homogeneity makes it highly implausible that they were votive gifts.

The research then addressed the problem of the weights' suspension: the absence of any trace of metal inside the holes suggests that cord rather than metallic rings was used for suspending the weights. The clay is remarkably hard and well-fired and shows no sign of wear around the holes. It is thus probable that groups of threads were tied to cord loops that passed through both holes. A recent study argues that the presence of two holes is a technological development that would probably have reduced the oscillation of the weights, resulting in higher uniformity of the fabric produced, and this was also applied to the discoid type introduced subsequently.<sup>32</sup>

We hypothesise that the discovered weights were hung perpendicular to the loom in two rows of 30. Multiplying this number by the average thickness of the weights (slightly less than 3.4 cm) gives a hypothetical width of the cloth of around 1 m.

The loom with the two-hole truncated-pyramid weights in the Square Building of the Sanctuary of Hera near the mouth of the Sele River would therefore have permitted the manufacture of bolts of very fine fabric, around 1 m wide, most likely woven with threads under a tension of 5–7.5 g (but not more than 10 g), with an average thickness of not more than 0.2 mm. While the limited number of two-hole truncated-pyramid loom weights makes possible a fairly straightforward reading of the archaeological data, analysis of the one-hole truncated-pyramid weights is more problematic, given both the high number of recovered samples and particularly the lack of precise excavation data that might have facilitated the identification of separate sets of weights.

Two groups of weights have nevertheless been identified in this class: a sufficiently homogeneous group of 127 samples (Group A) accounts for about 80% of the total number; another small group of 12 weights (Group B) could be part of a set of smaller weights. The remaining samples (20, about 20% of the total number) are either miniature or considerably larger than the other groups identified.

The "Group A" weights have very uniform dimensions despite the high number of samples: the height ranges mostly between 6.8 and 7.8 cm, the thickness between 4.4 and 5.4 cm and the weight between 170 and 230 g (Fig. 11.10). A closer examination by the CTR method, which considers the thickness-to-weight ratio of each loom weight, shows the notable uniformity of this group of weights, with which it would have been possible to weave fabric with threads of excellent quality needing a tension of 7.5 to 10 g, with an average thickness of about 0.2 mm. However, the threads/cm density would have been relatively low because of the notable thickness of the loom weights.

32 A similar hypothesis has also been advanced for the two-hole discoid weights found in several sites on the Ionian coast of Basilicata, Meo 2015.

Reference was made to the data in order to verify whether the samples could be used in a vertical loom with two rows of weights and a yarn tension of 7.5 g. It is not possible to exclude a tension of 10 g. However, given that the ideal density of good-quality fabric is around 20 threads/cm and is usually between 10 and 30 threads/cm, a tension of 10 g would have produced a fabric that was too open.

However, it remains to be clarified whether these weights were used on one or more looms, or were merely offerings. In order to resolve this question, we need to compare these with the two-hole truncated-pyramid weights.

The hypothetical density of cloth produced with the one-hole truncated-pyramid loom weights is between 9 and 14 threads/cm using threads with a tension of 7.5 g, and between 6 and 11 threads/cm when applying a tension of 10 g. As with the two-hole truncated-pyramid weights, the significant homogeneity of this group attests to their use on a loom.

Hence, it is possible that the 127 one-hole truncated-pyramid weights could have all worked together: placing the discovered weights in two rows, considering their average thickness, would have produced cloth 2.40–2.70 m wide. Comparison of this width with that of the two-hole truncated-pyramid weights, around 1 m,<sup>33</sup> allows us to consider the presence of such a wide loom implausible. However, it is not possible to exclude a loom with three or four rows of weights, in which case the cloth would have been 1.60–1.80 m wide or 1.20–1.35 m wide respectively. On the other hand, there may also have been more than one loom: if we consider the possibility of two looms using one-hole truncated-pyramid weights, 60 weights would have been used for each loom and the bolts would have been 1.20–1.35 m wide; if we consider three looms with this type of weight, the cloth would have been 80–90 cm wide and 40–42 weights would have been used for each loom.

Research is hampered by the lack of excavation data but the homogeneity of the identified sets is unusual, quite different from those found in other contexts with similar layouts in which loom weights have been identified as offerings.<sup>34</sup>

A different kind of information can be inferred from Group B, the one-hole truncated-pyramid weights, made up

33 At the moment, the only possible comparison with the research conducted by the CTR method is the loom from S. Biagio alla Venella (Metaponto) Meo 2014c, 146–150; Meo 2015, ch. 4.4. In this case the cloth would have been 80 cm wide, not drastically different from what is hypothesised for the loom with two-hole truncated-pyramidal weights in the Square Building.

34 For example, in the so-called 'area sacra del Vallo' in Herakleia, the presence of looms has been ruled out because of the non-homogeneity of the weights' dimensions in comparison with what is clearly seen in the houses of the Collina del Castello area of the same town, see Meo 2015, ch. 4.1–4.2.



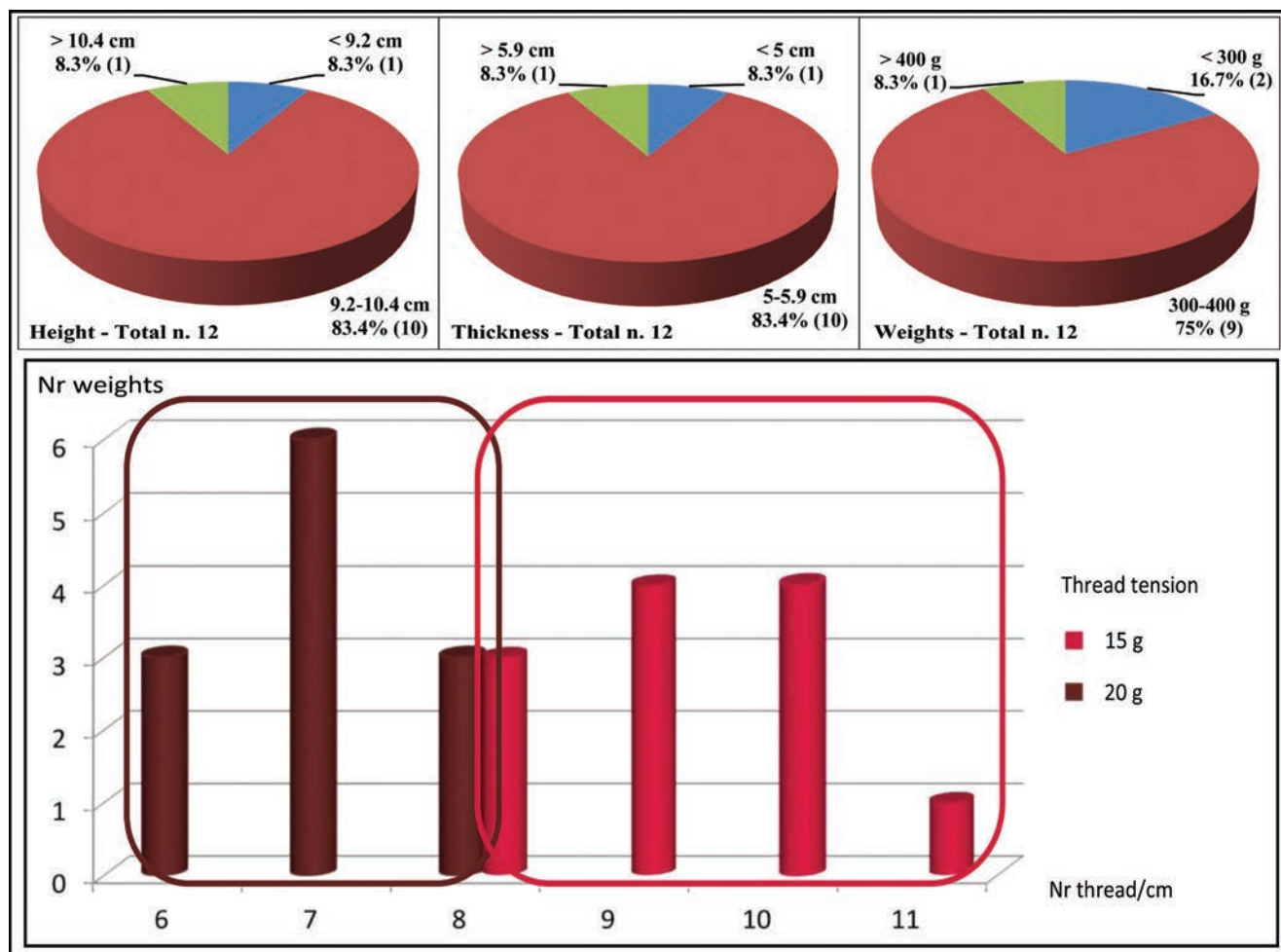


Figure 11.11. Square Building. Dimensions and fabrics from the group B of truncated pyramidal weights with one hole. © Francesco Meo.

of just 12 samples. They have a height of between 9.2 and 10.4 cm, a thickness of 5–5.9 cm and a weight of 300–400 g (Fig. 11.11). The difference in dimensions between this group and those of all the others previously analysed is evident, as is the difference between the fabrics: the thread tension is 15–20 g and their average thickness is about 0.5 mm.

The limited number of samples (12) indicates that they could be part of another set of weights. However, they might also constitute a set for a smaller loom producing cloth 30–32 cm wide, considering the average thickness of the weights and assuming that they were used in two rows. The quality would have been good but evidently inferior to that of the other sets previously described, and the cloth produced would probably have been used for different purposes.

Additional data on the workmanship of the fabric emerges from the least attested type,<sup>35</sup> the discoid loom weights, which number 50, with a diameter of 11 cm, a thickness of 2–2.5 cm and a weight of 280–350 g (Fig. 11.12).

All the discoid weights have two holes. Thanks to the data collected from numerous contexts along the Ionian coast of the present day Basilicata Region it is now possible to affirm that this type of loom weight appears in Sicily in the mid-5th century BCE and in Southern Italy in the late 4th century BCE, being attested there until the end of the 2nd century BCE.<sup>36</sup> A systematic bibliographical overview of the evidence, including a typology of loom weights, now allows us to clarify that they appear almost exclusively in the Greek colonies of Southern Italy and Sicily, while they are very rare in the indigenous sites.<sup>37</sup>

Analysis of the discoid weights prompts a series of considerations on their presence inside the Square Building: They would have been used with an average quality thread needing a tension of 15–25 g, with an average thickness of 0.6 mm, corresponding to a lesser quality than the cloth

<sup>36</sup> Meo 2015, ch. 3.

<sup>37</sup> Meo 2012; Meo 2013, 35–48; Meo 2015, ch. 3.

<sup>35</sup> Without counting the one pinched weight.

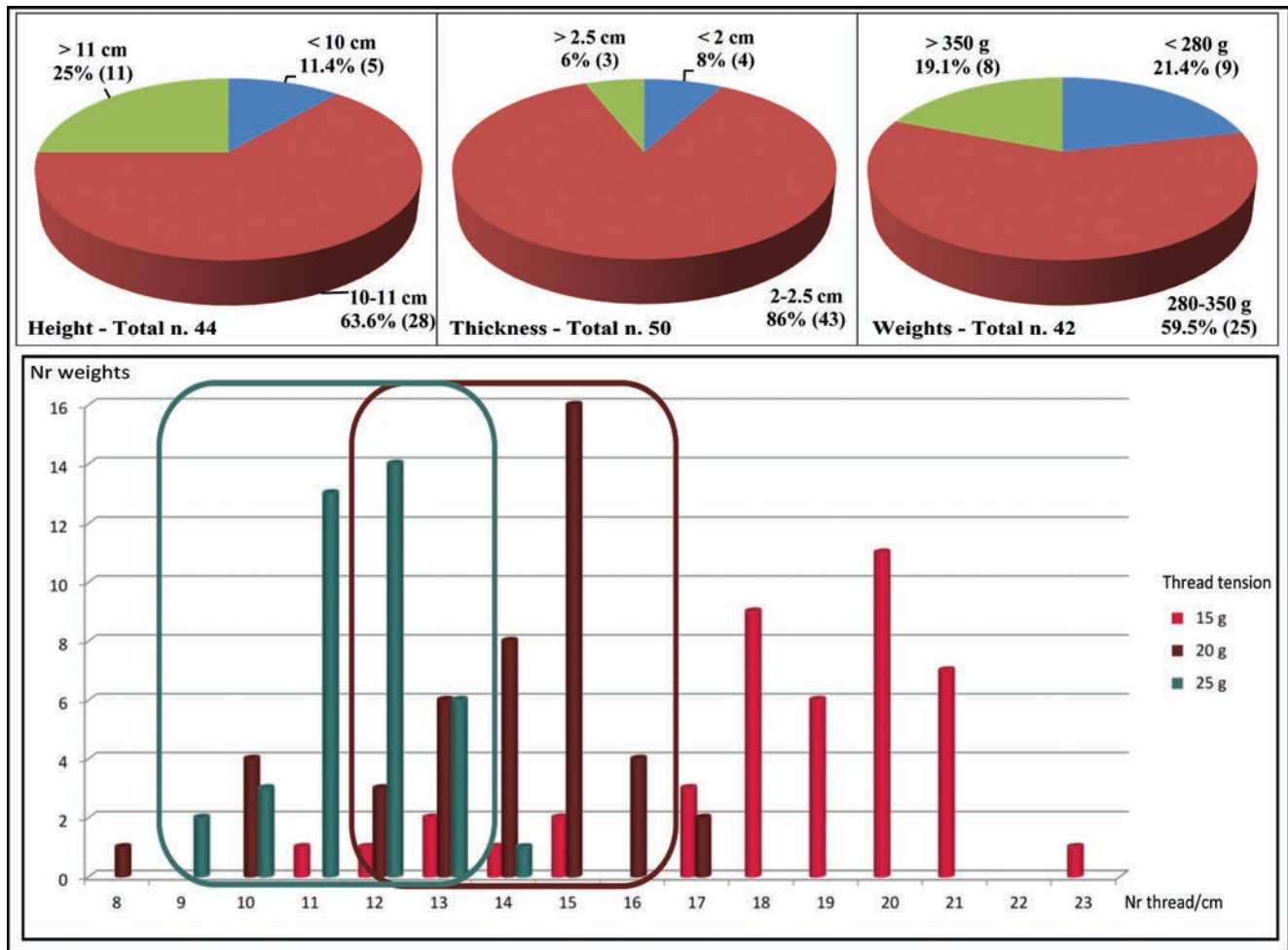


Figure 11.12. Square Building. Dimensions and fabrics from the group of discoid circular weights with two holes. © Francesco Meo.

produced on looms with the two-hole weights and the Group A weights, but similar to that of the Group B weights.

Considering the average thickness of the weights, and assuming that they were used on a loom with two rows of weights, it would have been possible to produce bolts of cloth 50 cm wide. Once again, the lack of precise archaeological data does not permit an easy interpretation of these weights. However, it is possible to hypothesize the presence of a loom for the manufacture of fabrics of average quality, poorer than the other qualities identified inside the Square Building.

### Conclusions (BF, FM)

Thanks to these new data it is possible to affirm that the vast majority of the loom weights found in the Square Building in the Sanctuary of Hera were used to weave cloth, on looms which numbered four to six, while a lower percentage of them could have been offerings.

These looms would have produced various qualities of fabric: the two-hole truncated-pyramid weights and the Group A weights were probably used with very thin threads, producing very fine fabrics. In contrast, the Group B loom weights and the discoid weights were more suited to weaving rougher and narrower cloths, probably for cloaks or matting.

Although the lack of precise archaeological documentation entails an error margin regarding the number of looms, their presence inside the Square Building is certain.

The different types of loom weights suggest that different qualities of fabrics were woven in the Square Building. It is possible that these textiles were used to make garments for the statue of the goddess Hera or for other ritual purposes in the sanctuary. One can hypothesize that this particular textile production was carried out by girls or women, not unlike “the Sixteen” girls mentioned by Pausanias in Greece.<sup>38</sup>

38 Paus. 6.24.10; Greco 1995, 97–104; Greco 2013, 15–23.

Thus, these data support Giovanna Greco's hypothesis that cloth was woven in the Square Building.

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## “Temple key” or distaff? An ambiguous artefact from the Greek and indigenous sanctuaries of southern Italy

*Alessandro Quercia*

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The different stages in the process of textile production in Classical Antiquity involved the use of various tools and equipment made of different materials such as clay, metals, bone, wood *etc.*<sup>1</sup> Archaeological deposits have yielded numerous objects which can be hypothetically related to textile making activities, however, only rarely do contexts provide us with secure evidence that some of them were associated with and employed in textile making. Among such objects are the “bow-” and “right-angle-” shaped metal rods, which are commonly interpreted as “temple keys”, and attested in numerous sanctuaries and tombs in southern Italy, with a particular concentration in Lucania,<sup>2</sup> an area of intense cultural contact between Greek and indigenous communities. However, as I will show, evidence from Greek red-figure vases makes it possible that some of these ambiguous metal objects would have been also used for textile production purposes, especially as distaffs in the spinning process.

The aim of this paper is to provide a preliminary picture of the available evidence for these objects from Greek and indigenous sanctuaries in Lucania and neighbouring areas, as well as from burials and domestic contexts. I will examine the role that these objects might have played in Classical Antiquity and their effectiveness and feasibility as distaffs in the manufacture of textiles. Finally, I will advance some observations, emphasising that this material opens questions rather than providing firm conclusions on this still ambiguous object.

### **Distaffs in Classical Antiquity**

Distaffs in Classical Antiquity were commonly held in the hand, but some longer specimens were positioned under the arm or tied to the belt. They were probably made of wood, as the ethnographic examples from different parts of the world attest. However, since wooden items are rarely found in archaeological contexts, those found so far – usually in tombs – are made of metals, including gold and silver, or other less common luxury materials like amber and glass.

Margarita Gleba provided us the first comprehensive typology of the objects identified as distaffs in Pre-Roman Italy.<sup>3</sup> Most of them were deposited as grave goods in the tombs dating to the Orientalising and Archaic periods of Central Italy (8th–6th centuries BCE), but they are also attested in the Roman period, as the iconographical evidence on the funerary monuments documents.<sup>4</sup> It is evident that these tools, especially those made of precious materials, were recovered mainly from tombs belonging to high ranking members of the archaic societies and that they represented a status symbol of the wealthy individuals (mainly women) who were buried in these particular tombs.<sup>5</sup> Gleba’s classification<sup>6</sup> grouped the distaffs from Pre-Roman Italy into two main morphological types including different variants (Fig. 12.1):

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1 For a general overview on the implements used for the textile production, see Gleba 2008, 91–159.  
2 See Pontrandolfo Greco 1982 for a historical and archaeological overview of Lucania.

3 Gleba 2008, 109–122.

4 Cottica 2007; Busana *et al.* 2012, 389–390; Larsson Lovén 2007.

5 Gleba 2008, 109.

6 Gleba 2008, 109–121.



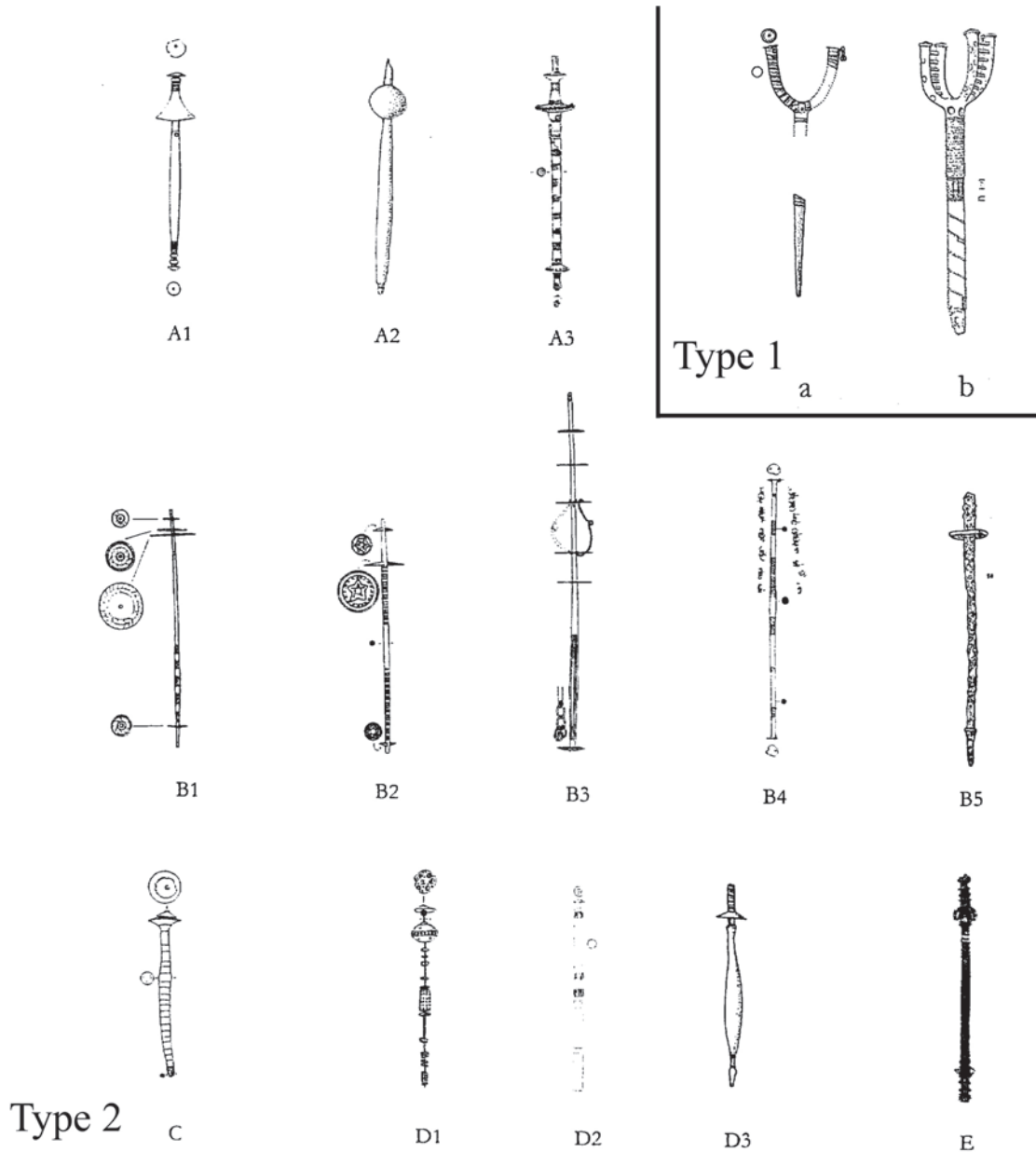


Figure 12.1. Gleba's classifications of distaffs (after Gleba 2008, figs. 82–83. Courtesy of M. Gleba).

- (1) A long stick with forked top, 100–150 cm long.
- (2) A short hand-held type, 20–30 cm long. The type is characterised by a top of various shapes (spherical, conical or flat) and by one or more disks inserted on the shaft; sometimes the shaft is composed by more decorated elements made of different materials (such as bone and amber). The shaft is frequently decorated by incised motifs.

Similar distaffs are also depicted on some contemporary artefacts, as for example on the bronze *tintinnabulum* from Bologna's necropolis, dated to 600 BCE.<sup>7</sup> Here, three

women are represented spinning and holding empty distaffs in their hands whose shape reminds one clearly of some variants of the type II of Gleba's classification.

However, it has to be said that apparently the archaeological data does not seem to show much clear evidence of distaffs belonging to Gleba's classification in Southern Italy. In particular, the variant with a solid cast bronze staff and disks on each edge and decorative incisions<sup>8</sup> is documented predominantly in some Etrusco-Campanian sites of modern Campania and in the Greek town of Cuma, while the composite distaff made of bone and/or

<sup>7</sup> Gleba 2008, 30, fig. 8.a.

<sup>8</sup> Gleba 2008, 115–117.

bronze element<sup>9</sup> was sporadically recovered in Greek and indigenous settlements of South Italy chronologically later than the previous variant, for example in the Greek cities of Herakleia, Locri and in the Apulian settlement of Canosa.

Also, it has to be observed that the effective identification of some of these objects as distaffs is not conclusive. In fact, some of them were frequently identified as spindles, while some long shafts interpreted as sceptres could be rather tentatively identified as distaffs based on their shapes, like the specimens from an indigenous cult of place in Calabria.<sup>10</sup> Vidale also suggested that some distaffs were held by female figures (women or goddesses) depicted on the Greek vases as if they were sceptres, thus acquiring a symbolic meaning as well.<sup>11</sup> Also, it cannot be excluded that some specimens, especially those made of valuable and fragile materials like glass or amber, were neither effective nor practical for spinning activities, but rather served purposes of display, connoting culturally and symbolically the textile production practiced by the deceased women.

Textual sources record the dedication of distaffs in sanctuaries and to deities in general. The distaff of Tanaquil, the wife of Tarquinius Priscus, king of Rome, was displayed in a temple of Sancus erected in Rome in the mid-5th century BCE.<sup>12</sup> Distaffs alongside other textile equipment were also dedicated to deities in the Greek world: an epigram from the *Greek Anthology* tell us that an entire familial nucleus composed of four sisters who were engaged in textile making in the Greek town of Taranto in South Italy dedicated spindles, distaffs and loom weights to Athena.<sup>13</sup> Also, three sisters from Samos dedicated their textile equipment including a distaff to the same goddess.<sup>14</sup>

Many representations of distaffs are depicted in different scenes of textile making and everyday life on Greek red-figured vases;<sup>15</sup> the distaffs are always held by women and they are frequently associated with spindles in the following standardised scheme (distaff held by the raised left hand, thread and spindle held by the right one). The short hand-held distaff is the most commonly represented type. These distaffs are characterised by circular, disc or ovoid knobs on its extremity, while less frequently the

handle is represented with a pierced end,<sup>16</sup> most likely for hanging the implement from the spinner's belt. In fact, the actual shape of the distaff is almost hidden by the amount of fibres attached around their top, which gives a circular or oval form to it. In some cases, these objects seem to be very similar to other implements like the mirrors and the exact identification of which type of object was depicted is often unclear (Fig. 12.2). It has been emphasised by some scholars that this ambiguity might have been intentional and might have expressed the symbolic similarity and closeness between the two objects, both of which are markers of female gender and everyday activities<sup>17</sup>.

### A new type of distaff? Finds and contexts

On the contrary, the distaffs are almost never represented empty of fibres, making the identification of their effective outline quite difficult. One of the rare cases where the distaff is represented partially empty and the process of winding the fibre around the object is clearly shown is on a red-figured *pyxis* from Athens dated 490–480 BCE.<sup>18</sup> On this vase, among various representations of textile making, a scene of spinning is depicted in an unusually realistic way, if compared to the other depictions of the same stage of textile production on the Greek vases. A woman is represented seated and bent over a basket full of textile fibres (Fig. 12.3): the forward position of the woman's back clearly indicates the stress of the physical labour. She holds a spindle with a small amount of thread wrapped around in her raised right hand, while the left hand keeps a right-angle-shaped object with two knobs at the edges where she's wrapping the fibre. It might be suggested that a stage prior to the spinning activity is perhaps rendered on this Attic *pyxis*.

The right-angle-shaped object does not seem to have close parallels in the iconography of Greek painting and it can be tentatively interpreted as a distaff. Very similar objects were recovered from archaeological deposits of sanctuaries, as well as in numerous burials and in other domestic contexts of Greece and Southern Italy. In particular, Greek and indigenous sites of Southern Italy yielded a certain number of these ambiguous finds, which can be roughly distinguished into two types (Fig. 12.4): the "Z-" (or right-angle-) shaped and the bow-shaped ones. These artefacts are summarised in the table below.

With regard to Southern Italy, an outstanding morphological parallel of the textile tool is represented in the Attic *pyxis* with some iron implements, which are attested in a votive deposit of the extra-urban sanctuary of Hera at Paestum (Table 12.1,

9 Gleba 2008, 117–119.

10 A bronze object consisting of a 27 cm long knobbed shaft decorated on the top by a human figure between two bovines was found in a sacral building at Temesa Campora di San Giovanni. The find was interpreted as a sceptre, but its shape can recall also Gleba's A1 type distaff: La Torre 2002, 282–284, fig. 57.

11 Vidale 2002, 395.

12 Plin. *NH* 8.74.194.

13 *Antologia Palatina* (AP) 6, 288; see also Mele 1997, 101.

14 *Antologia Palatina* (AP) 6, 174.

15 For the iconographical sources, see Vidale 2002, 386–431.

16 Vidale 2002, 421, fig. 117.

17 Frontisi-Ducroux and Vernant 2003, 75–92.

18 Di Giuseppe 1996, 34, fig. 5; Vidale 2002, 397–400, fig. 105a–c.



Figure 12.2. Woman holding a distaff-like mirror from an Attic red-figured vase. Paris, Musée du Louvre, no. G121, Creative Commons.



Figure 12.3. Woman holding a right-angle-shaped textile tool from an Attic red-figured pyxis (after Di Giuseppe 1996, fig. 5. Courtesy of H. Di Giuseppe).

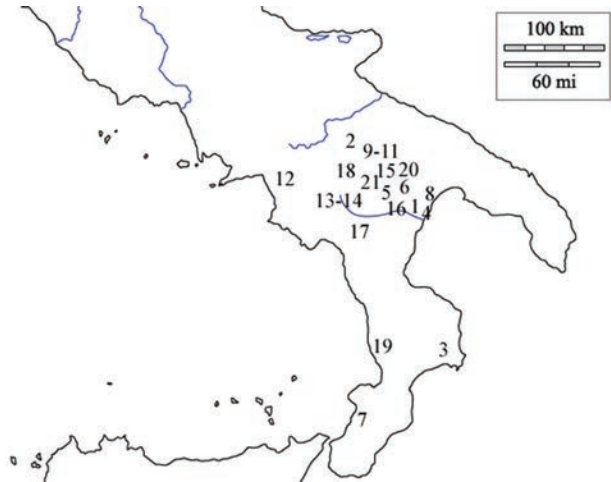


Figure 12.4. Map with the distribution of right-angle-shaped and bow-shaped objects in Pre-Roman South Italy.

12). Here, a concentration of about 25 (13 complete items and many damaged ones) similar objects were found in the area of the so called “Square Building”. In particular, the distaff depicted in the Attic pyxis is reminiscent of the Z-shaped implement with a knobbed edge attested in the Paestan sanctuary (Fig. 12.5.2). The other type has a bow-shaped form (Fig. 12.5.1) significantly different from that of the distaff on the above-mentioned vase and one of the edges is pierced, presumably for hanging the object.<sup>19</sup> The specimens belonging to the right-angle-shaped type have a length ranging from 40 and 55 cm (except for a small item 14 cm long) and the cross section of the rod is squared.

Very similar artefacts were discovered in numerous sanctuaries in Greece<sup>20</sup> and Southern Italy. Modern Lucania and Calabria, two of the areas of Southern Italy with the most intense cultural contacts between Greek and indigenous communities, yielded some specimens of this artefact not only from cult places but also from burials and domestic contexts in a chronological range of between mid-6th century BCE and the 4th century BCE, with a major concentration in the second half of the 6th century and the 5th century BCE. The length of the specimens is between 13 and 63 cm, with a major concentration comprised between 20 and 35 cm. The weight of these objects was never recorded in the literature.

Besides the sanctuary of Hera in Paestum, right-angle-shaped and bow-shaped metal implements were found in other extra urban sanctuaries dedicated to the same goddess, as in the sanctuaries of Hera at Crotone and at Metaponto

19 Zancani Montuoro *et al.* 1965–1966, 154, fig. 23A, pl. 94.

20 Similar objects, interpreted as keys are documented in some cult places in Greece: see bibliographical references in Zancani Montuoro *et al.* 1965–1966, 156.



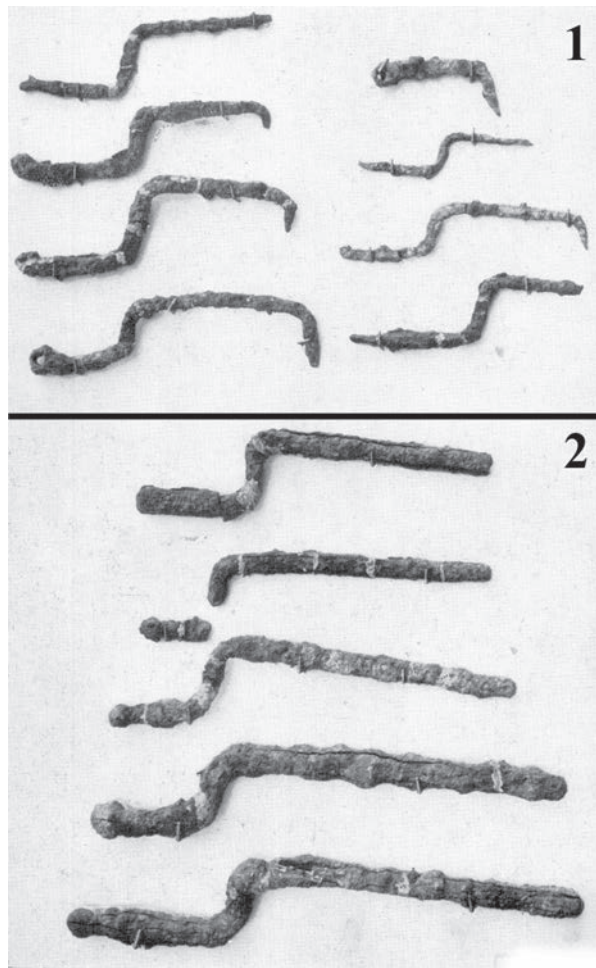


Figure 12.5. Paestum. Distaffs (?) from the extra-urban sanctuary of Hera at Foce del Sele. 1) bow-shaped type 2) right-angle-shaped type (after Zancani Montuoro et al. 1965–1966, pl. 44).

(respectively table 1, no. 3 and 8). This close association of these objects with sanctuaries dedicated to this goddess is further enhanced by the discovery of numerous specimens made of bronze in the Greek *Heraia*,<sup>21</sup> in particular in those at Argos, Perachora and Samos. However, both of the types attested in the *Heraia* of South Italy are also documented in votive deposits of Banzi (no. 2), Timmari (no. 20), Garaguso (no. 5) and Serra Lustrante at Armento (no. 16), indigenous settlements located in inland Lucania with narrow cultural contacts with the Greeks on the Ionian shores. On the contrary, only the right-angle-shaped type occurred in the 6th century temple unearthed in the area of the ancient settlement of Temesa, in Calabria (no. 19). Another specimen is attested in a votive deposit of Calabria, specifically in the Greek city of Medma (no. 7). Also, the indigenous sites of Lucania and the neighbouring areas provide some specimens from archaeological contexts

which differ in character, such as from female tombs<sup>22</sup> and from houses.<sup>23</sup>

These artefacts are traditionally interpreted as “temple keys”, keys for practical or symbolic purposes in cult contexts.<sup>24</sup> It was suggested that they might have been dedicated by housewives and that they symbolised women’s responsibility as well as protection of the house.<sup>25</sup> According to other scholars, these keys are thought to symbolise the opening of the womb in relation to childbirth. They were donated in the cult places by women close to or just after childbirth,<sup>26</sup> for example in the *Heraion* at Argos and in the sanctuary of Aphaia in Aegina.<sup>27</sup> The interpretation of this object as a temple-key is commonly accepted and based on the visual evidence of a Greek red-figured vase (*hydria*) dated to the 5th century BCE.<sup>28</sup> Here, a woman is shown opening a door with a Z-shaped key (Fig. 12.6). This depiction is unique in Greek art. Large right-angle-shaped objects with knobbed edges and an ornate fabric band hanging from the rod are frequently carried by women in Greek and South Italian red-figured vases of the 4th century BCE (Fig. 12.7),<sup>29</sup> as well as in some funerary reliefs from Attica.<sup>30</sup> In many Greek myths, as for example in the representation of Orestes and Cassandra and in the theft of the *Palladium* (i.e. the statue of Athena) at Troy, these women are interpreted as priestesses carrying the temple keys. However, none of these objects is rendered in the act of opening a door and also the rod seems to be too long for a practical use as a key.

Considering that the shape of such objects is very similar to the artefact depicted on the Attic *pyxis*, it could be argued that a part of these metal objects and in particular the right-angle-shaped type was rather aimed at textile production purposes, especially as distaffs in the spinning process.

Although the available data cannot fully confirm that this metal object was used only for textile activities, some contexts of provenance of these objects are nonetheless helpful for

22 Examples are from Sala Consilina (nos. 13 and 14), Oppido Lucano (no. 9), Guardia Perticara (no. 6) and Alianello (no. 1).

23 From Oppido Lucano (nos. 10 and 11), Tricarico (no. 21) and Serra di Vaglio (no. 18).

24 Diels 1897, 124–127; Daremberg and Saglio 1873–1919, vol. 4.2, s.v. *sacerdos*, 940, figs. 5989–5990.

25 Baumbach 2004, 82.

26 See Zancani Montuoro, Schläger and Stoop 1965–1966, 157.

27 Baumbach 2004, 81–82.

28 Diels 1897, 133–135; Daremberg and Saglio 1873–1919, vol. 3-1, s.v. *Janua*, 605, fig. 4128; Beazley 1963, 1083, no. 4.

29 For instance, priestesses carrying a large, right angled shaft are represented on the *krater* of Asteas (Trendall 1936, 29, pl. 6, fig. 13) and in two amphorae located at Berlin (Trendall 1936, 78, pl. 28.c) and Vienna (Trendall 1936, 83, fig. 48).

30 Diels 1897, 126, fig. 14–17.

21 See Baumbach 2004, 81–82, 90.



Table 12.1 Catalogue of the “right angle” shaped objects in south Italy

| No. | Site                                                       | Context        | Number of specimens                  | Type                                   | Length (in cm) | Date of context                                 | Bibliography                                                                                    |
|-----|------------------------------------------------------------|----------------|--------------------------------------|----------------------------------------|----------------|-------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1   | Alianello, <i>Loc.</i> Caiazzola, tomb 736                 | Tomb           | One                                  |                                        |                | 6th century BCE                                 | Guarnieri 2006, 137, fig. 134                                                                   |
| 2   | Banži, Fontana dei Monaci                                  | Votive deposit | Two                                  | Bow-shaped type (2)                    | 25             |                                                 | Masseria 1999, 481–482, figs. 18, 28–29                                                         |
| 3   | Crotone, sanctuary of Hera at Capo Colonna                 | Cult building  | Four                                 | Z-shaped type (4)                      |                | 6th century BCE                                 | Spadea 1994, 11–12                                                                              |
| 4   | Heraklea, sanctuary of Demeter                             |                |                                      |                                        |                |                                                 | Pianu 1997, 63–64, pl. II.1                                                                     |
| 5   | Garaguso, <i>Loc.</i> Altieri                              | Votive deposit | Three                                | Bow-shaped type (2)                    | 24–33          | Second half of the 6th to early 5th century BCE | Hano et al. 1971, 437, fig. 20; Morel 1974, 386, fig. 11; Bertesago 2011, 49, fig. 1.j          |
| 6   | Guardia Perticara, tomb 163 and 210                        | Tomb           | Two                                  |                                        |                | 5th century BCE                                 | Guarnieri 2006, 137                                                                             |
| 7   | Medma, <i>Loc.</i> Calderazzo                              | Votive deposit | One                                  |                                        |                | 5th century BCE                                 | Orsi 1913, 142, fig. 188                                                                        |
| 8   | Metaponto, extraurban sanctuary of Hera at Tavole Palatine | Votive deposit | Two (more specimens are only quoted) | Bow-shaped type (1), Z-shaped type (1) | 18, 25.5       | 6th century BCE                                 | Lo Porto 1981, 36–38, fig. 22                                                                   |
| 9   | Oppido Lucano, tomb 47                                     | Tomb           | One                                  | Z-shaped type                          | 26.5           |                                                 | Lissi Caronna 1980, 176, tomb 47, fig. 80                                                       |
| 10  | Oppido Lucano, house C                                     | House          | One                                  | Z-shaped type                          | 18             | 320–280 BCE                                     | Lissi Caronna 1983, 349, no. 13 fig. 144                                                        |
| 11  | Oppido Lucano                                              | House          | One                                  | Z-shaped type                          | 17             |                                                 | Lissi Caronna 1980, 251, fig. 189, no. 10                                                       |
| 12  | Paestum, extra-urban sanctuary of Hera at Foce Sele        | Votive deposit | 25 (13 complete)                     | Bow-shaped type (4), Z-shaped type (5) | 14 to 55       | Between the end of the 6th century and 430 BCE  | Zancani Montuoro <i>et al.</i> 1965–1966, 152–158; Cipriani <i>et al.</i> 1996, 231, no. 174.50 |
| 13  | Sala Consilina Tomb A 146                                  | Tomb           | One                                  | Bow-shaped type                        | 30             | Second half of the 6th to early 5th century BCE | De La Genière 1968, 302, pl. 21.5                                                               |
| 14  | Sala Consilina Tomb A 156                                  | Tomb           | One                                  | Bow-shaped type                        | 26             | Second half of the 6th to early 5th century BCE | De La Genière 1968, 306, pl. 23.1                                                               |
| 15  | San Chirico nuovo                                          | Votive context |                                      |                                        |                | First half of the 3rd century BCE               | Tagliente 2005, 120                                                                             |
| 16  | Serra di Armento, sanctuary, room 5                        | Votive context | One                                  | Z-shaped type                          | 13             |                                                 | Russo Tagliente 2000, 71, no. 29, fig. 72.                                                      |

(Continued)

Table 12.1. Catalogue of the “right angle” shaped objects in south Italy (Continued)

| No. | Site                              | Context        | Number of specimens     | Type              | Length (in cm) | Date of context                                  | Bibliography                                |
|-----|-----------------------------------|----------------|-------------------------|-------------------|----------------|--------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------|
| 17  | Serra di Rivello, loc. Colla      | Votive deposit | One                     | Z-shaped type     |                | Mid-4th to the first half of the 3rd century BCE | Bottini <i>et al.</i> 1998, 131, no. 20     |
| 18  | Serra di Vaglio                   | House          | One                     | Bow-shaped type   |                | 4th century BCE                                  | Greco 1991, 62, fig. 130                    |
| 19  | Temesa, loc. Campora San Giovanni | Cult building  | Three (one fragmentary) | Z-shaped type (2) | 52, 63         | 6th century BCE                                  | La Torre 2002, 304 no. P 95 and 96, fig. 68 |
| 20  | Timmari, Loc. Lamia San Francesco | Votive deposit | Three                   | Z-shaped type (2) | 13, 21, 35–40  | Hellenistic period                               | Vacca 2011, 87, fig. 5a                     |
| 21  | Tricarico                         | House          | One                     | Bow-shaped type   | 21.5           | 3rd century BCE                                  | Bourdin 2008, 550 no. 1296, fig. 345        |



Figure 12.6. Women opening a door with a Z-shaped key from a Greek red figured hydria (after Daremberg and Saglio 1873–1919, vol. 3-1, 605, fig. 4128).

supporting the hypothesis of their employment in textile activities. Analysing the extra urban sanctuary of Hera at Paestum where the highest concentration of these hypothetical distaffs was found, we can notice that they were located in the same building where the presence of hundreds of loom weights makes it likely that weaving for sacred purposes was



Figure 12.7. Priestesses holding right-angle-shaped objects from Greek red-figured vases (after Daremberg and Saglio 1873–1919, vol. 4-2, 940, figs. 5989–5990).

practiced.<sup>31</sup> However, it has to be stressed that the distaffs were not found physically associated with the loom weights, but were positioned in a dump prior to the foundation of the Square Building, which is dated to around 400 BCE.<sup>32</sup> A recent revision interpreted this dump not as a votive deposit but as a drainage work functional to the construction of this building, which likely contained former offerings.<sup>33</sup>

Furthermore, some of these objects were found in close association with other textile implements. Emblematic is the case of Serra di Vaglio, an indigenous settlement of inland Lucania. Here, one of these objects was found in a room

31 Greco 1997, 192–196; Greco and Ferrara 2003, 119, fig. 17.

32 Zancani Montuoro *et al.* 1965–1966, 29–30; Greco 1997b, 265–271. See also Ferrara and Meo this volume

33 Greco 2003, 116–118.

of a domestic house, where a concentration of 108 weights makes the presence of a loom most likely.<sup>34</sup> Likewise, a 6th century BCE tomb from another Lucanian settlement, Alianello, yielded numerous grave goods including one of these Z-shaped objects and textile implements, such as spindle whorls and spools.<sup>35</sup>

### Final remarks

To sum up, the paucity of the collected data allows us only to raise open questions and stimulate the debate rather than affirm conclusive statements on this particular matter. The following observations can be formulated:

- The identification of these objects is not yet entirely clear. There are neither sufficient data for stating with certainty that the so-called temple keys were employed as distaffs for the process of spinning, nor for confirming that they were effectively used as keys in ritual and domestic contexts. The interpretation that these objects were employed as keys is based upon only one single piece of iconographical evidence (the opening of a door with a similar tool) as well as the hypothesis of their use as spinning tools.
- Analogously, the archaeological contexts where these objects were found do not provide secure evidence about their actual use. However, some of them are found in association with tools such as loom weights, spindle whorls and spools, which make their association with textile working likely in some cases.
- The presence of these artefacts in association with sanctuaries and ritual contexts is well documented but it is not exclusive, since burials and houses provide evidence of them as well. If we accept the assumption that some of them were distaffs, their presence in cultic contexts might be explained as dedication of equipment by women engaged in textile making analogously to what is rendered in the textual sources, and the well-attested dedication of loom weights and spindle whorls.<sup>36</sup>
- Do all these objects have the same function? The two types (the bow-shaped rod and the right-angle-shaped shaft) which are distinguishable might hypothetically have been employed for different purposes.
- Also, it cannot be ruled out that these objects were multi-functional, used for a variety of purposes rather than being used exclusively as keys or distaffs.
- If some of these objects were actually used as distaffs, why were they morphologically different from the distaffs, which were commonly represented in the

Greek vases and recovered in the archaeological deposits? Was it a special kind of distaff, used for a particular kind of wool or other fibre?

It would be helpful to develop some aspects for future research to clarify the meaning, roles and functions of this class of objects:

- A full survey of the literature for identifying the objects which were previously interpreted in a different way.
- A more accurate morphological classification of these objects, including use of dimensional parameters and recording of their physical attributes (size, materials, weight).
- More attention to their archaeological contexts.
- Experimental tests reproducing this artefact with modern replicas in order to test their feasibility for use as a distaff, to find out if they are too heavy, too long, sufficiently manoeuvrable for holding the fibre in the spinning stage and if this special kind of distaff was used for a particular kind of fibre.

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34 Greco 1991, 61.

35 Guarneri 2006, 137, fig. 134.

36 Gleba 2008, 178–187; Gleba 2009; Sofroniew 2011.

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## On priests, priestesses, and clothing in Roman cult practices

*Lena Larsson Lovén*

A variety of textiles and dress styles were used for many different purposes on a daily basis in ancient Roman society. While the clothed body was a cultural standard in everyday life, dress was an important visual marker to identify aspects of the gender and status of the wearer as well as the social context in which they appeared. The realm of religion made no exception to this custom. Priests and priestesses in traditional Roman cults were, as part of their cultic duties, normally fully dressed according to special requirements.<sup>1</sup> But how was clothing in Roman cult practices constructed in relation to the clothes of everyday life? This contribution will focus on a few examples of the clothes used in some Roman public cults, *sacra publica*, from the end of the 1st millennium BCE and the relationship between cultic dress and the clothing of daily life.<sup>2</sup> Both literary and visual evidence can testify to the use and roles of clothes in cult practices; the examples in this chapter primarily concern traditional Roman cults in the city of Rome, with evidence from both iconography and written sources.

### Roman priesthoods and dress

Roman religion embraced an extensive number of deities, cults and sanctuaries with priests, some priestesses, and assistants. The *pontifex maximus* held the supreme position in the priestly hierarchy with an over-arching control of Roman public religion. In Republican times, he was a

high-status person who was selected exclusively from aristocratic families, but in Imperial times the emperor assumed the highest priestly position. Julius Caesar was appointed *pontifex maximus* in 63 BCE, and it was the first emperor Augustus (30 BCE–14 CE) who set the model for his followers. From his time onward, the role of *pontifex maximus* became one of the standard assignments of the Roman emperor. Statues survive of Augustus showing him dressed in a toga, with his head partly covered. Such images represent a sacrifice taking place.<sup>3</sup> In general, the toga appears most often as the dress of priests.<sup>4</sup> The simple undecorated toga, the *toga pura*, made of wool, was the standard dress of adult men who were Roman citizens as it clearly visualised the status of the wearer as member of a citizen body. The toga was required at public occasions and it was possible to add further details to the basic toga. This could be done to augment the status of the wearer, to add symbolic meaning of the garment, or to adjust its arrangement on the body according to specific situations.<sup>5</sup> Priests and magistrates were dressed in the *toga praetexta* decorated with a purple border, a garment of protection which marked the status of the person entitled to wear

<sup>1</sup> The regular use of textiles in cultic contexts were not limited to dress, but also implied several other kinds of textiles. See Fernandez Nieto and Molina Gomez 2012 for a discussion on the use of textiles in cults, other than clothes.

<sup>2</sup> For a definition of public cults see Rüpke 2007, n. 21.

<sup>3</sup> Goette 2012, 25.

<sup>4</sup> Stone 2012.

<sup>5</sup> Some examples of how the toga could communicate various moods, situations or the specific status of the wearer are the dark/black toga (the *toga pulla*) which was used when in mourning or in personal difficulties, while the *toga candida*, the whitened toga, was used by Roman politicians when campaigning for a public office; Stone 1994, 15; Sebesta 1994, 46.

it.<sup>6</sup> It was a garment with a long tradition, believed to be of Etruscan origin. According to Pliny the Elder it was introduced to Rome in the 7th century BCE, during the reign of King Servius Tullius (NH 9.63.136). There were also more specific garment details and regulations to identify particular priests or priest colleges. The *toga praetexta* had to be made of wool, the most common fibre in Roman clothing, especially those used by priests and magistrates performing religious rites. The combination of wool and purple had vital symbolic connotations as wool was used in purification rites and purple was considered to have a protective function.<sup>7</sup>

A *flamen* was a Roman priest of high status and who was devoted to the service of one particular god in central public cults (Cic. *De Leg.* 2.8). The most important Roman god was Jupiter, whose priest was a *flamen Dialis*. These priests can serve as an example of the regulations, in clothing and several other ways, which circumscribed the life and appearance of a priest of a public Roman cult. The *flamen Dialis* wore a tunic, a toga (*praetexta*), a *laena*, a thick woollen cloak, and a specific conical cap that will be further discussed below. When necessary he covered his head with part of the toga, but in a ritual situation he could also cover his head with a laurel wreath.<sup>8</sup> According to Aulus Gellus, a *flamen* could not use any clothes or clothing details with knots (NA 10.15.9). The strict dress regulations also embraced the *flaminica*, the wife of the *flamen Dialis*, and their marriage was governed by the requirement of this priest to marry a virgin bride and was never to marry a second time. Hence this marriage was a life-long commitment that could only last as long as the wife lived. She, too, had to follow special dress requirements, which implied wearing a dyed robe and a small rectangular cloak with a border, called a *rica* (Gell. NA 15.17). It is not altogether clear from the sources whether this was a cloak or a veil, but some have argued that she wore a veil – a red-orange coloured *flammeum*, just like a Roman bride.<sup>9</sup> The hair of the *flaminica* was arranged in a special coiffure, a *tutulus*, which was a conical form plaited with purple bands<sup>10</sup> (Varro LL 8.44.). The *flaminica* was not a priestess in her own right but more of an assistant to her husband. Still the dress regulations for him, and many other aspects of his daily life, were also vital agencies in the life of his wife who had to appear in a dress that identified her role as the wife of an important priest, the *flamen Dialis*.

## Priests, cult assistants, and dress codes on the Ara Pacis

One visual example where different kinds of dress, especially male, related to cult practices and hierarchies occur is the rich iconography of the Ara Pacis Augustae, the Augustan Altar of Peace in Rome. It was built at the very end of the 1st millennium BCE, between 13–9, and erected in the centre of ancient Rome in the Field of Mars. The iconography decorating the precinct around the altar shows reliefs with two parallel friezes of processions and four panels with mythological motifs. These scenes are very informative and show how Roman dress was visualised in a public context. On the southern side procession a group of four priests appear which illustrates the combination of the toga and further details signalling the function and status of the wearer as a specific priest. Three of the men have been identified as the top priests, *flamines maiores*, of the gods Jupiter, Mars and Quirinus (Fig. 13.2). Each of the men is dressed in a toga, which is likely to be the *toga praetexta* although it is not clear from the image, over which they wear a *laena*, a woollen cloak.<sup>11</sup> They have headgear, a very tight fitting cap, a *galerus* said to be made from the skin of a sacrificial animal. For the *flamen Dialis* it was to be the skin from an animal sacrificed to Jupiter. On top of the cap is a very characteristic wooden stick, an *apex*, made of olive wood placed on a lock of wool. This was a sign of the role as a priest and his high status (Festus 10). The *flamines* were not allowed to show themselves in public without the cap, or with their head uncovered.<sup>12</sup> The identification of the *flamines* has been somewhat debated but the fourth man, who is equally dressed as the other three, has been suggested to represent the *flamen Iulialis*. While the other three *flamines* belonged to ancient cults, this was a more recent priesthood which was dedicated to the cult of the deified Julius Caesar, murdered in Rome in 44 BCE, and the adoptive father of Augustus. This priest appears to be a somewhat older man than the other three *flamines* and is seen in the background of the other priests.<sup>13</sup> Behind the *flamines* in the procession there is a young man carrying an axe, a *securis*, over his shoulder which was used for sacrifices. He too is wearing a toga and his head is covered with part of his dress. He may well be the *flaminus lictor*, an assistant of the *flamen Dialis*.<sup>14</sup> Apart from the *flamines*, other kinds of priests, *sacerdotes*, are not easily identifiable in the frieze.<sup>15</sup>

6 Stone 1994, 13; Molina Gomez 2012, 64.

7 Sebesta 1994, n. 46.

8 Molina Gomez 2012, 65.

9 La Folette 1994, n. 55; Sebesta 1994, 48; Hersch 2010.

10 Molina Gomez 2012, 65.

11 Simon 1967, 17.

12 Molina Gomez 2012, 65. According to Aulus Gellus, in the past, the *flamines* were not allowed to appear without head covering even under a roof; NH 15.17.

13 Zanker 1990, fig. 98.

14 Simon 1967, n. 17.

15 Rüpke 2007, 23.

In the Ara Pacis frieze, the priests are accompanying Emperor Augustus who is at the head of the procession. It has been interpreted as the inauguration of the area in the Field of Mars where the altar was to be erected, or as the opening ceremony of the altar after it had been built. On both occasions a ceremony with processions and a sacrifice would have taken place. The emperor is dressed in the toga that was reintroduced in this period as a dress requirement for Roman citizens on all public occasions.<sup>16</sup> During the period of the altar's construction, Augustus assumed the role of high priest, *pontifex maximus*, in 12 BCE and from then on was the head of Roman state religion until his death in 14 CE. In the frieze, he is seen with part of the toga covering the back of his head which is a familiar sight from several representations of Augustus as well as other men who are performing a sacrifice. To cover one's head, *capite velato*, was a regular feature in cultic dress and, according to Livy (59–17 BCE), male head covering was an old tradition in Roman cult practices which marked the participation in rituals and the worship of the divinity. He mentions, for example, an augur with his head covered at the inauguration of King Numa, traditionally dated to c. 700 BCE indicating the long tradition of male head covering at religious ceremonies (Livy 1.18). According to Plutarch, covering the head when sacrificing was also a way of preventing the priest from being distracted as a religious act had to be completed without interruptions (Plut. *Mor.* 266C; cf. also Lucr. *De Rerum Natura* 5.1198–1200).<sup>17</sup>

In the first part of the northern side of the Ara Pacis frieze (partially restored), more toga clad men appear in procession. A couple of them have their heads covered with a toga, while others wear a laurel wreath – an alternative way of covering one's head in a ritual context (Fig 13.1). Behind the first group of *togati* there is another man in a differently arranged toga. He too has a laurel wreath on his head and he wears a tunic, but his toga is bound around the waist. This was the so called *cinctus gabinus*, a way of

arranging the toga in a cultic context that left both hands free to perform more complicated ritual tasks which the ordinary way of draping the toga did not.<sup>18</sup>

The figure of Augustus on the Ara Pacis relief is partly damaged. However, enough remains of it to identify that a sacrifice is taking place and that Augustus is represented in parallel to the main character on the relatively well preserved right scene of western side of the altar, which represents Aeneas. According to legend, Aeneas was originally a Trojan who survived the long Trojan War and became the ancestor of the Roman people. Aeneas is seen in a pose similar to that of Augustus, and he is about to perform a sacrifice. He is *pious* Aeneas, embodying one of the most important traditional Roman moral codes of duty. In contrast to Augustus he has a beard and is dressed in a richly draped cloth, but without a tunic underneath. This is possibly to evoke associations of past times and of the “original” form of the toga which is said to have been worn directly over the naked body and with no tunic underneath (Aul.Gell. *NA* 6.12).<sup>19</sup> It may furthermore have been meant to represent a purple garment to emphasise the importance and prestige of Aeneas (Verg. *Aen.* 3.405). Purple was the most exclusive dyestuff throughout Antiquity, with a long continuous history of symbolising power and prestige.<sup>20</sup> The back of Aeneas' head is covered, to mark that a sacrifice, which is an offering consisting of a sow and fruits, is taking place.<sup>21</sup> Two male assistants, *camilli*, are delivering the objects to be sacrificed. The lower rank of the assistants compared to Aeneas is marked by their dress as they are wearing shorter, belted tunics, with short sleeves. The tunic was the Roman all round garment, used by men and women alike from different social layers. It changed according to age, gender and status, but people of lower status usually wore a belted tunic.<sup>22</sup> The two *camilli* have wreaths on their heads which mark the sacrificial context.

There is a building with two small figures visible in the background to the left. They represent the traditional house gods who were part of domestic cults and everyday life in Roman society. It was the obligation of the head of the family, the *pater familias*, to see to the offerings of the household gods, *lares* and *penates*. An example from domestic cult practices, a 1st century CE Pompeian painting

16 The more strict roles of clothing in public launched in an early phase of the reign of Augustus (30 BCE–14 CE) was in line with the emphasis/renaissance of several older Roman traditions, not least in the sphere of religion; Zanker 1990, 101–136.

17 An example of the importance of proper dress and behaviour during rituals is given by Livy who reports the story of Marcus Horatius Pulvillus, a Roman politician at the very beginning of the Roman Republic, in the late 6th century BCE. He was a consul in 509 BCE which was the traditional year of the inauguration of the most important Roman temple, that of Jupiter Optimus Maximus on the Capitolium. As a consul, Marcus Horatius Pulvillus was a leader of the state, and in this capacity, he was appointed to inaugurate the temple. In the act of inaugurating the temple he received very bad news of his son's death, but Horatius Pulvillus, however, completed the act of sacrifice without interruptions as otherwise the procedure would have implied bad omens (Livy 2.8.7).

18 Dubordieu 1986.

19 There has been some debate whether this is to be interpreted as a toga or not. It has been argued that he is wearing a toga; Simon 1967, 23, but also that, if following Vergil, it would have been anachronistic to clothe Aeneas in a toga, cf. Bender 1994.

20 Reinhold 1970.

21 For a discussion of animal sacrifice in Roman cults see Scheid 2012.

22 See Pausch 2003 for a detailed study of the Roman tunic.





Figure 13.1. Part of the originally northern frieze of the Ara Pacis, depicting togati with heads covered either by part of their toga or by a laurel wreath. Photo: L. Larsson Lovén.

of a *lararium* from the House of the Vettii which shows a man dressed in a toga with a purple border covering the back of his head.<sup>23</sup>

The above-mentioned examples demonstrate the standard procedure of covering the back of the head with part of a toga while performing a sacrifice, both in public and in domestic cults. In some cults, however, it was common practice for priests to perform the sacrificial rituals with an uncovered head, *aperto capite*, according to *sacra ritu Graeco*. This was done in the cults to Saturnus, Hercules and Apollo, and at some later point it appears to have also included the cult of the goddess Ceres.<sup>24</sup>

Further down on the southern side on the Ara Pacis there are some well-preserved parts of the frieze which include women and children. Several of the women have part of their mantle covering their head. Adult women wore a mantle as an outer garment: it was standard for married women to cover their heads and hair with part of their mantle when in public. Female head covering differed from that of men by not just covering the back

of the head. At a religious ritual, a female head could be covered for the same reason as that of a man. A couple of women have wreaths on their heads emphasising a religious sacrifice, one of them on the southern side frieze, is usually interpreted to represent Antonia Minor, the youngest niece of Augustus.

### Female clothing and Roman cult

A *flaminica*, such as the *flaminica Dialis* mentioned above, obtained her position through marriage with a *flamen*, not in her own right. Her position, and that of many other women is significant for Roman women as, in general, they had much more restricted, or less visible, roles in society and religion than men.<sup>25</sup> However, there were female priesthoods, which were some of the few accepted public roles for females. The most well-known type of priestesses is those in service of Vesta, the goddess of the hearth. Vesta had a college of six priestesses, the Vestal Virgins, with a unique position in Roman society. The cult is considered to be very ancient, from the regal period, and in Republican times the candidates for priestess were only

<sup>23</sup> Stone 1994, n. 14, fig. 1.2.

<sup>24</sup> Scheid 1995, 20, 27. For more details and discussions on the *ritu Graeco* see Scheid 1995.

<sup>25</sup> For an overview of female roles see Scheid 1992.





Figure 13.2. Part of the northern frieze of the Ara Pacis depicting the emperor Augustus at the head of the procession. He is followed by four men with their heads covered by tight fitting head gear as a symbol of their role as flamines. Photo: E.M. Lindroth.

chosen among the daughters of aristocratic families from between the age of six to ten (Aul. Gell. NA 1.12.1–3, 5, 9, 14). From childhood, the chosen girls were trained for the assignment that was due to last for three decades.<sup>26</sup> Life as a Vesta priestess was restricted and controlled in detail. The *pontifex maximus* was the head of the priestess college and in control of the vestals. When chosen to be a priestess, a woman agreed to serve the goddess and the Roman state for 30 years and to live in chastity during her entire time of service, hence Vestal Virgins.<sup>27</sup> A small, round temple in the centre of Forum Romanum in Rome was dedicated to the goddess in which there was a hearth, symbolising the Roman state. The most vital task for the priestesses was to upkeep the holy state fire in the temple.<sup>28</sup> The vestals had a restricted life, but also gained privileges which rendered them a high (social) status, especially for the chief priestess, the *Virgo Vestalis Maxima*.

The role as a vestal was visually demonstrated through dress as all of them wore a specific outfit, an indicator of their role as servants of the goddess. The official dress was

composed of several different clothing items that were used by other categories of Roman females too. It consisted of various layers of clothing, mostly made from wool, but not easily identifiable from visual representations or information from written sources as they are not abundant. A statue at Museo delle Terme di Diocleziano in Rome shows a vestal wearing a belted robe which has been interpreted to represent a stola, a garment coupled to married women (Fig. 13.3).<sup>29</sup> The stola was an ankle-length garment, worn over a tunic, which specifically indicated the married status of a woman and was not used by unmarried women. The stola may be seen as a female dress equal in status to that of the male toga. It could be belted, but belted garments were probably more commonly associated with the attire of a Roman bride. The traditional bridal outfit, to be made by the bride herself, was belted with the so-called knot of Hercules, which the husband was supposed to untie on the wedding night.<sup>30</sup> The various garments used by the vestals were made of wool, but they used an outer vestment which was said to be made of linen (Plin. *Ep.* 4.11). As seen in the sculpture in Museo delle Terme di Diocleziano, it was fastened by a brooch at the front. The coiffure, which worked as a complement of the dress, was arranged with woollen bands, *vittae*, which were also traditionally used by several other female categories, unmarried girls, brides and respectable married women.<sup>31</sup> The coiffure of a vestal was arranged in a complicated way, *sene crines*, with the hair divided into six braids. This was also how the hair

26 From 5 CE also daughters of freedmen were eligible as vestals, Tacács 2008, 81.

27 Tacács 2008, 80–86. According to Plutarch, a Vestal Virgin who broke the vow of chastity, or was suspected or accused of unchastity, could be punished by being buried alive, Plut. *Numa* 10. A couple of such punishments of vestals are recorded in ancient sources, and according to Livy, the first took place in 483 BCE; Liv. 2.42, 9–11.

28 It has been argued that the Vestals were not proper priestesses as their most important task was to guard the fire in the temple of Vesta, and sacrifice was not in their duties although they attended sacrificial acts; Goette 2012, 27.

29 Tacács 2008, 83; Gallia 2014, 226.

30 Sebesta 1994, 48; Hersch 2010, 110.

31 Fantham 2008, 163–168. Fantham also discusses the relation between *vittae* and *infualae*.



Figure 13.3. Statue of a Vestal Virgin in the public dress, hair style and head covering of a priestess of the goddess Vesta. Museo delle Terme di Diocleziano, Rome. Photo: L. Larsson Lovén.

of a Roman bride was arranged and it has attracted much scholarly discussion.<sup>32</sup> The head of a vestal was covered by a shoulder-length white veil with a purple border, the *suffibulum*.<sup>33</sup> The *vittae* used by the vestals were white, which was also the colour of their official dress.<sup>34</sup>

32 Stone 1994, 57–61, figs. 3.1–3.6; Goette 2012, 25–27, figs. 10a–b; Gallia 2014, 225 with further references.

33 Gallia 2014, 228.

34 Goette 2012, 27.

## Conclusion

Clothes had a central part in visualising a cult and communicating the status of priests and priestesses. Some general remarks of clothes in cult practices are that white clothing was traditional as this was the colour of purity and it was associated with the gods.<sup>35</sup> Another feature is the impression of simplicity in dress which was considered appropriate in a religious context and symbolised the pious way of approaching the divinity.<sup>36</sup>

As demonstrated by the examples discussed above, Roman cultic dress could be put together by various clothing items that were used in several different social contexts in everyday life. Thus, a specific cult dress could be composed of various well-known sartorial details put together resulting in a new and specific clothing combination. The dress of the vestals is an example of how a combination of various clothing items used by females in Roman society could be combined and turned into a specific outfit with a particular symbolism. In this case the garment details were used in a mix of other sartorial contexts by unmarried young women, by brides, and possibly by married women, *matronae*. In contrast to the expectations on the majority of Roman women, the vestals were obliged to live a chaste life, but still used garments associated with categories of female individuals who lived a different life. A Roman bride, often a teenager at their first marriage, represented a liminal stage on her wedding-day. She had left childhood and was on the doorstep to an adult life as a bride. The purpose of marriage was to beget legitimate children, implying female sexuality, but only the controlled sexuality in wedlock was accepted for women. Neither marriage nor childbirth was part of the life of a vestal as she had agreed to live in chastity for the 30 years of her service. A vestal was free to marry after her service, which means that she was likely close to 40 when she reached this stage in life; we may assume, however, that most vestals never experienced a wedding day of their own.<sup>37</sup> The vestals were a unique group of women in Roman society but, through dress, they shared some sartorial markers with other categories of women despite having a distinctly different appearance to women in general through their public outfit.

35 Sebesta 1994, 48.

36 Patera 2012, 36, 40.

37 The sexual status of the vestals has been discussed by Mary Beard in a paper from 1980 where she recognised the ambivalence in the status of the vestals who wore garment details that a bride would wear on her wedding day. In the dress of a vestal these details occur in a different context and clothing combination. A vestal may therefore be seen in what for most Roman women was a transitional state, but here perpetuated; Beard 1980.

Ordinary garments, like the male toga was a multi functional item which was commonly also used in religious rituals. To mark a special occasion or a specific meaning, details could be added or the draping of the toga could vary according to the specific situation. A general feature of clothes in public cult practices is that dress codes directed how to dress and it was therefore not an individual choice, but the result of long-term traditions and dress code regulations. The specific clothing with further insignia was a distinct mark of the role and status of a priest or priestess of a specific cult.<sup>38</sup> One of the fundamental meanings of a diversified clothing system is, through appearance, to establish membership in social bodies and contexts.<sup>39</sup> The sight of, for instance, a vestal, or the *flamen* and *flaminica dialis* would have been unmistakable through their dress, clearly reflecting their roles in public cults, and of their social position in Rome.

Clothes are a way of immediately identifying a person. In general, clothes in Roman society were used to mark the social and legal identity of a person as well as their age and gender. This system also applies to cult practices where dress was used to identify priests and priestesses of specific cults, their status and their gender.

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38 Molina Gomez 2012, 64.

39 Stig Sørensen 2000, 131–134.





## Part III

### The Levant and the Near East



## Textiles in Assyrian and Babylonian temples from the 1st millennium BCE

*Salvatore Gaspa<sup>1</sup>*

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The role of textiles in the development of the socioeconomic basis of the civilizations in the Ancient Near East and the Mediterranean Area is known, at least in its main traits. But the role that textiles played in the religious life of these areas of the Ancient World deserves to be investigated further in light of the progress in the field of ancient textile research that have been made in the last decades. In Mesopotamia, since the foundation of the first complex urban societies at the end of the 4th and the beginning of the 3rd millennium BCE onwards, the textile manufacture has been oriented towards the needs of the temple and palace households. These two complex organizations absorbed most of the textiles which were produced locally or imported from abroad. In the 1st millennium BCE, the age which sees the creation of imperial structures, of vast multi-cultural states, and of more integrated trade networks in the Ancient Near East, the temples continued to be the centres of the religious life and the main seat of the cultural identity of a country, and, not less important, a terminal of the economic system in the surrounding region. The temple cult required the ordinary service to the gods and this comprised the supply of clothes for the divine statues. In fact, in the Mesopotamian religious thought, the statue of a god was far from being a passive and static visual representation

of the deity; on the contrary, it could become the animated body of the god after the execution of rituals of consecration. The “activity” of the Mesopotamian gods was made manifest especially through their “journeys”: during divine processions their statues were brought outside the *cella* and reached other sanctuaries. These religious practices clearly determined a continuous demand for new textiles needed to clothe the god’s statues (especially on the occasion of special yearly cult ceremonies), as well as for the mending of old ones. Also the objects with which the divine statues were associated needed constant repair. The highly developed professional specialization in the textile sector is strictly connected with these cultic affairs. In addition to the maintenance of the gods’ statues, the priestly personnel and all the cultic performers operating in the sanctuaries represented another important category of textile consumers in cultic contexts. Other products of the textile industry, such as dyed wool, usually in the form of yarn, also had a great significance in cult since it was manipulated by the cultic performer as ritual materials in conjunction with other substances. Finally, textiles constituted both elements of embellishment of the interior of sanctuaries and important components of the god’s belongings.

In this study, I will confine my considerations to the cultic contexts of the main temples of Assyria and Babylonia (Fig. 14.1). The most important temple complex in 1st millennium Assyria was the shrine of the national god of the Assyrians in the city of Assur (modern Qal’at Šerqāt), which in Neo-Assyrian times was also called Libbāli, “The Inner City”. In this city, where the kings were enthroned and the kingship of the god Aššur was periodically reaffirmed in royal rituals, there were temples dedicated to other important deities of the Assyrian pantheon, such as Ištar and Nabû.

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Figure 14.1. Assyria and Babylonia in the 1st millennium BCE (after Van De Mieroop 2007, 210).

Other sanctuaries of the “Great Gods” (*ilāni rabūti*) venerated in the Assyrian state cult were located in Kalḫu (modern Nimrud) and Nineveh (modern Quyunjiq), the main cities of the core region of the imperial territory. The cuneiform tablets from the archives of these cities enable us to know various aspects of the consumption of textiles in palace and temple *milieux* of the Assyrian Empire during its apogee in the 7th century BCE. After the downfall of the Assyrian Empire under the Median and Babylonian attack in 612 BCE, the sources for the reconstruction of the organisation of the cult in 1st millennium BCE Mesopotamia remain those stemming from the archives of the Neo-Babylonian state. Here, the bulk of the documentation comes from the archives of two important sanctuaries, namely the Eanna temple in Uruk (modern Warka), the great sanctuary of the goddess Ištar, and the Ebabbar temple in Sippar (modern Tell Abu Habbah), which was the seat of the cult of Šamaš. The time span of the majority of the texts from these archives is the 6th century BCE; these documents shed light on the period of the political independence of the Neo-Babylonian kingdom (626–539 BCE) and on the beginning of the Persian dominion of Babylonia (539–520 BCE).

Textiles in cultic contexts have been treated in recent studies, but a re-consideration of the question through a unitary approach is needed. This topic has been treated by Beaulieu in his work on the Neo-Babylonian pantheon of Uruk in the evidence of the Eanna texts<sup>2</sup> and by Zawadzki

in his studies on the divine garments attested in the Ebabbar archive.<sup>3</sup> Before these works, the first study devoted to garments of divine statues, although limited to Babylonian cultic practices, was carried out by Oppenheim in 1949.<sup>4</sup> A reconsideration of this crucial aspect of the Mesopotamian cult was also made by Matsushima in a paper of 1993 focusing on fashioning and clothing of gods’ statues, predominantly attested in the Neo- and Late Babylonian texts.<sup>5</sup> Accordingly, in this contribution I will present a unitary description of the divine wardrobes documented in both the Babylonian temple archives of Uruk and Sippar of the 1st millennium BCE in order to reach some conclusive observations on the phenomenon of “statue-clothing” in the Mesopotamian temples of this period. Secondly, I shall compare the Neo-Babylonian evidence with the data stemming from the Neo-Assyrian sources in order to propose some identifications of the 1st millennium divine vestments. Cultic textiles were not limited to costumes for the representations of divine beings. Therefore, the second part of the paper will deal with the role that textiles played as clothes of cultic performers and as elements aimed at embellishing the interior of sanctuaries. This part will enable us to have a more complete idea about the use of textiles in Mesopotamian cultic contexts.

2 See Beaulieu 2003.

3 See Zawadzki 2006 for the discussion on the Ebabbar-related textile industry and Zawadzki 2013 for the texts.

4 Oppenheim 1949, 172–193.

5 Matsushima 1993, 209–219.



Why did the gods' statues have to be clothed? The idea at the basis of the dressing of the divine statues in Mesopotamian religious practice is that humans were created by gods with the specific task to serve them in every aspect of their daily life. Accordingly, gods needed to be appropriately bathed, fed, clothed, and entertained by humans. The anthropomorphisation of divine beings in the early period of Mesopotamian civilisation certainly strengthened this idea, since the gods were conceived as having the same or analogous needs of humans. Other aspects of the divine statues and their cult may be considered in the light of the specific theological concepts characterising the Mesopotamian religion. The image of the divine beings was considered a sort of living entity. In fact, divine statues as well as other objects related to the divine world were subjected to specific rituals, such as the ritual for the "washing of the mouth" (*mīs pī*) and the one for the "opening of the mouth" (*pīt pī*); these ritual operations were aimed at "activating" the statue. Once "activated", the divine *simulacrum* could consume the offered foods and drinks and participate in religious processions. More importantly, these rituals enabled the god's statue to communicate with humans.<sup>6</sup> Therefore, dressing divine statues and god-related objects represented one of the most important acts of devotion towards the deity. Consequently, a large sector of the temple-centered economy of the Mesopotamian cities was oriented to production, decoration, washing, and repairing of these "divine" textiles. Although all these aspects become clearer thanks to recent studies devoted to the topic, much has still to be made as regards the study of the relationship between garments and deities and the religious significance that certain items of clothing, colour, size, weight, and decorative elements had in the Mesopotamian theological conception.

### Textiles for divine beings in Assyria and Babylonia: statues of gods and other divine entities

#### *The wardrobe of Ištar and of other goddesses*

Investigation of the main textile products consumed in temples illustrates that garments for goddesses constitute the majority of the attestations of articles of clothing in the 1st millennium BCE archival documents, at least in Uruk. A different picture emerges in Sippar, where most of the attestations concern garments for Šamaš, a male god. This archival situation clearly reflects the predominant roles of certain deities in local panthea and cultic activities. Information on the wardrobe of goddesses may also be found in earlier periods. In Old Babylonian times, for instance,

garments for Ištar of Lagaba, as well as Ištar and Nanāya of Larsa are attested.<sup>7</sup> Concerning the 1st millennium evidence, we may observe that the written sources stemming from the Neo-Assyrian archives are scarce and the few details about textiles used in cultic contexts must be compared with the richer data originating from the Neo-Babylonian archives. In an inventory text from the Aššur Temple in Assur various items of clothing are listed. The textiles are collectively qualified as "garments from Hamath" (*kuzippē ša Hamate*),<sup>8</sup> although there are also some items which are connected to different regions of origin (a Tabalean SILUḪ and a Babylonian *niksu*).<sup>9</sup> Given the fact that the "steward" (*laḫḫinu*) of the temple is mentioned in the text as the person in charge of these items,<sup>10</sup> it is reasonable to think that the listed garments were used in the Aššur Temple; some of the garments were probably destined to be used by the cultic personnel, others were for the divine statues and related paraphernalia. The list includes royal garments (*kusītu*, *ša muḫḫi šarri*)<sup>11</sup> and items of clothing of different use (for example, the well-known *šupālītu ḫalluptu* used by the Assyrian soldiers). There are also textiles of possible cultic use, such as the *niksu* and the *sasuppu*,<sup>12</sup> presumably used by the cultic performer, and the *dappastu*,<sup>13</sup> a cover possibly used for the bed of deities. Garments for divine statues could have included some of the *kusītus* listed in this document. Colour is another possible indication of the temple destination of these textiles; some items of clothing are white (*pašiu*),<sup>14</sup> a common trait of ritually pure garments.<sup>15</sup> The mention of textile products from abroad in this list demonstrates that the import of exotic vestments for cultic purposes was not in contrast with the cultic regulations of the Assyrian temples.

7 Maggio 2012, 130–131.

8 StAT 3, 1 e.35.

9 StAT 3, 1 r.24, 31.

10 StAT 3, 1 e.36 50 *šu-pu-uq'-tú* IGI LÚ.láḫ-ḫi-ni 'SUM' ina qa-ZAG la kar-'ru', "Fifty (pieces) are the assignment at disposal of the temple steward; (therefore,) they are not located according to the instructions".

11 StAT 3, 1:2–3, r.30.

12 StAT 3, 1:10 38 TÚG.nik-si BABBAR.MEŠ UŠ ZAG SA<sub>5</sub>, "Thirty-eight white *niksu*-textiles with red sides and front part"; *ibid.* r.28 8 TÚG.šu-sú-up GÜN, "Eight multi-coloured *sasuppu*-textiles".

13 StAT 3, 1 r.18–19 4 TÚG.dáp-pa-sat ḪÉ.MED / 4 TÚG.: GE<sub>6</sub>, "Four red blankets, four black blankets".

14 StAT 3, 1:5, 10, 16, r.26, 30, 32.

15 See, e.g., the Assyrian ritual text KAR 141 r.20–22 (Ebeling 1931, 90), describing the donation of a white garment at the end of the ceremony. The white colour probably attested the achievement of a state of purity by the devotee.

6 Gaspa 2012, 9, 26, 38. On the texts for the *mīs pī* and *pīt pī* rituals, see Walker and Dick 2001.

The production of the wardrobes for the divine statues was the charge of the temple textile artisans, who received the raw materials, above all, fibres and dyeing substances, to produce a large variety of items of clothing as well as other textile products in a given period of time. In a contract from the Nineveh archive (682 BCE) some textiles are said to be at the disposal of a chief weaver, evidently for the manufacture of divine garments. The text also specifies that these textile products are the “fine work” (*dullu qatnu*) belonging to a god.<sup>16</sup> Weavers of the temple of Ištar in Arbela (modern Erbil) are mentioned in a letter of Nabû-šarru-ušur sent to King Esarhaddon. The sender informs the king about the provision of red wool from the palace storeroom to the temple weavers; the red wool would have enabled them to fabricate textiles for the king.<sup>17</sup> The same letter mentions *kusītu*-garments,<sup>18</sup> probably to be identified with the textiles which the weavers had to fabricate, and also some operations to be done as regards the multi-coloured garments (*birnu*) which were placed in front of the breast of Adad’s statue.<sup>19</sup> We wonder whether measurements of the statues to be clothed were done by weavers in charge of the production of the “divine garments”. This is not attested in the available sources, but we know that analogous measurements were done to calculate the amount of precious metal needed for their decoration.<sup>20</sup>

That the adorning of statues constituted an important part of the temple-oriented textile production in Assyria is also evident from an administrative document from Nineveh listing amounts of wool, linen, and madder for various purposes; in particular, an amount of seven talents and ten minas is said to be allocated by the central administration for the production of some textiles, presumably articles of clothing, associated to statues of gods.<sup>21</sup> To dye this amount of red wool 22 talents of red dye were needed.<sup>22</sup> More specific details on the work carried out by the temple weavers are scarce in the Neo-Assyrian texts. Sometimes, the royal correspondence informs us about weavers who

were behind their assigned quota of work, as can be seen in a Nabû-mušēši’s letter to the king.<sup>23</sup> Another letter of complaints concerns the weavers of the city of Arbela who, according to the sender, did not send the garments commissioned to them.<sup>24</sup> Given the fact that the author of the letter, a certain Aplāya, was a priest of Kurbail, it is reasonable to think that the garments in question were the vestments for the divine statues.

Most of the elements of clothing of which we find evidence in texts from the Eanna archive are related to the *lubuštu*-ceremony. This was a cultic event consisting in clothing the statue of the god.<sup>25</sup> A letter sent to the Assyrian king by Rāšil informs us that on the 3rd day of the month of Elūlu (August–September) the dressing ceremony of Bēl took place.<sup>26</sup> From Rāšil’s words, it is also clear that he was in charge of this ceremony.<sup>27</sup> This religious event is documented in texts stemming from Babylonian archives and it is not clear whether its rare attestations in the Assyrian official cult<sup>28</sup> are due to the nature of the sources or to the fact that this ceremony was alien to the Assyrian religious traditions. Instead, we know that the *lubuštu*-event continued to be celebrated in the Hellenistic period, at least in Uruk.<sup>29</sup> In the Eanna temple archive, divine garments are documented for Ištar, Nanāya, Bēltu-ša-Rēš, Ušur-amāssu, Urkayītu, Aḫlamayītu, Antu, Gula, DIGI.DU, a group of female deities known as “the Goddesses”, as well as for Nabû and Dumuzi. Therefore, the wardrobe of Ištar may be considered as highly representative of the vestments of Neo-Babylonian deities, since it comprises many items of clothing that also characterise the clothes of other goddesses. Her statues, placed in the Eanna temple in Uruk as well as in other Babylonian shrines, were clothed with a rich variety of garments (*išḫenabe*, *kusītu*, *lubāru*, *salḫu*, *šibtu*, *šubātu ša sādī*), outer garments and wraps (*ḫullānu*, *naḫlaptu*), headgear (*eru*, *lubāru kulūlu*, *lubāru mētu*, *paršīgu*), scarves, sashes, and belts (*guḫalšu*, *ḫuṣannu*, *mēzeḫu*, *nēbeḫu*). Her statues were not only covered with various vestments which surpassed in number those of the other

16 / LÚ.GAL—UŠ.BAR. M[EŠ], A depot of four [...-textiles] and four nīksu-textiles, fine wor[k], belonging to the god [...], at the disposal of Urdā, chief weav[er].

17 SAA 16, 84:12–r.11.

18 SAA 16, 84:8.

19 SAA 16, 84 r.12–13 *ù bir-me ina IGI ir-te / [ša] IM nu-x[x x]*, “Furthermore, we shall [*finish?/change?*] the multi-coloured garments (placed) before the breast [of (the statue of)] Adad”.

20 See CTN 3, 95, a text from Fort Shalmaneser in Nimrud listing measurements of gods’ statues belonging to the Temple of Nabû.

21 SAA 7, 115 r. i 10–11 [S]ÍG<sup>1</sup>.HE.MED *a-kil-tú* / 7 GÚ 10 MA UGU NU, “[R]ed wool, consumption: seven talents and ten minas, (for garments to be put) upon (the divine) statues”.

22 SAA 7, 115 r. i 12–13.

23 SAA 13, 145.

24 SAA 13, 186 r.3’–4’.

25 On the clothing ceremony in 1st millennium BCE Babylonia see Beaulieu 2003, 15–21 with further literature. The practice of dressing statues of gods is already attested in previous periods of the Mesopotamian history. See, for example, Biga 2010, 166, citing a text from Ebla (75.G.1524) which mentions the ritual dressing for the goddess Nintu in the temple of Kura.

26 SAA 13, 176:8–9. To this event is to be referred also the letter SAA 10, 356.

27 SAA 13, 176:12–r.11.

28 van Driel 1969, 167.

29 Linssen 2004, 54–56.

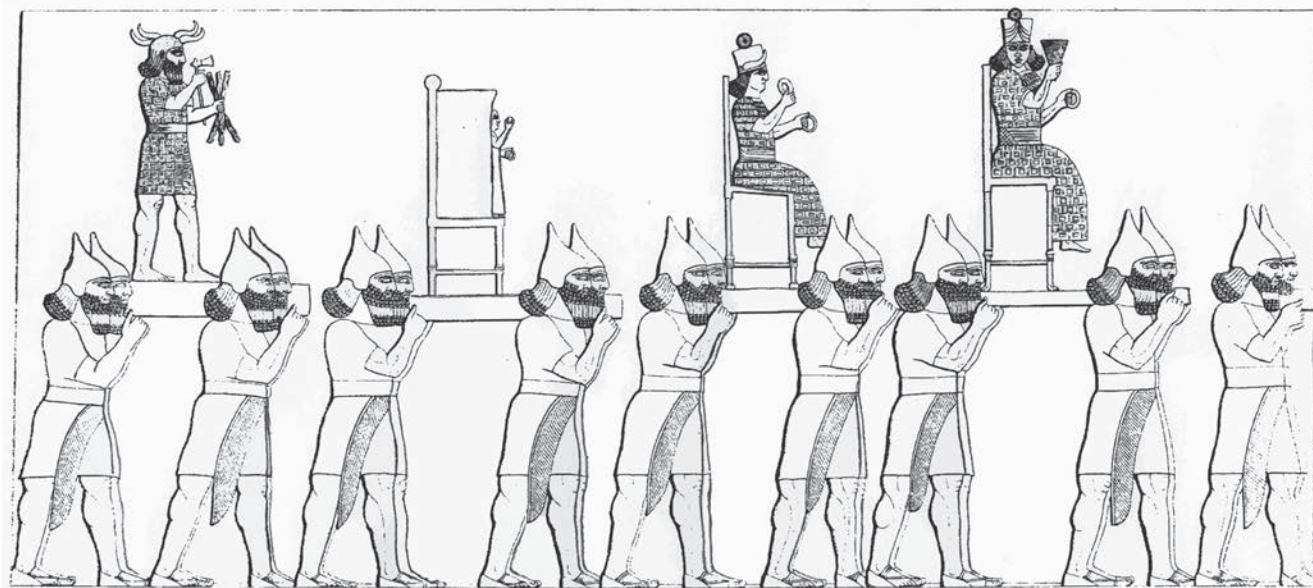


Figure 14.2. Alabaster wall-panel from the Southwest Palace at Nineveh, depicting dressed statues of male and female deities in procession (after Layard 1849–1853, I, pl. 65).

gods' *simulacra*. The richness of her attire also concerned the variety of colours and decorative elements adorning her garments. All these elements were intended to convey the idea of Ištar's majesty and power, above all, her special position in the Uruk pantheon. It is interesting to observe the absence of the *lubāru*-garment in the Sipparean goddesses' wardrobes and its exclusive use for male deities, a fact that leads us to interpret the use of this article of clothing by the "androgynous" deity as a reflection of her dominant position in the Uruk pantheon.<sup>30</sup> The relationship between items of clothing and divine powers of the goddess, which is expressed in the poem of *Ištar's Descent in the Netherworld*, witnesses to the theological significance attributed by Mesopotamians to the goddess' clothing as a manifestation of her divine personality and powers. At the crossing of the Seven Gates of Kurnugia, she is deprived of elements of her attire, namely jewels and garments, such as the breast-band cloth, the belt, and the tunic.<sup>31</sup> References to the garments worn by the Babylonian Ištar may be found in Assyrian texts. In the literary composition known as "the Marduk Ordeal" there is a description of the attire which covered the statue of the goddess: the Lady-of-Babylon is said to have been clothed with black wool on her back (*ina kutallišāni*) and red wool on her front (*ina*

*pānišāni*).<sup>32</sup> Evidently, the author of this composition uses the word "wool" (*šipātu*) in metonymical use to indicate her garment. This description seems to perfectly accord with the prevailing red-black chromatic dualism characterising wool garments in administrative texts from Nineveh; in some cases, these texts specify that the vestments had a coloured front (*pūtu*)<sup>33</sup> or rear part (*zibbutu*).<sup>34</sup> To the details provided by the Neo-Assyrian texts we may add those of the contemporary iconographical evidence. For instance, in the scene of the procession of goddesses' statues on thrones, which is depicted on the Slab 36 of the Wall R of the Southwest Palace at Nineveh, the short-sleeved tunics of the goddesses show an overall surface with square-shaped concentric elements (Fig. 14.2).<sup>35</sup> In contrast, in a seal impression, the garment is characterised by hexagonal

30 Zawadzki 2010, 411.

31 Pettinato 2005, 456–457, lines 51–52, 54–55, 60–61. The same items are returned to the goddess when she goes out from the Netherworld. See *ibid.*, 460, lines 119, 121, 122.

32 SAA 3, 34:42–43 [<sup>d</sup>*be-lit*—KÁ.DINGIR].RA.KI ša SÍG.MI *ina ku-tal-li-šā-ni* SÍG.*tab-ri-bu* *ina pa-ni-šā-ni* 0] / [x x x *ina pa-na-ti*]u-uš-šā da-mu ša šur-ri ša tab-ku-u-ni [šū-nu], "[The Lady-of-Ba]bylon who has black wool on her back and red wool on her front [...] the red wool] on her [front] is blood of the heart which was shed [...]".

33 SAA 7, 93:1–2; 94:4; 95:1, 2, 3; 96:5', 7', r.1; 97:7', 10', r.1, 3; 98:2', 3', 5'–10'; 100:6'; 102:5'; 103 r.3'; 104:3'; 105:3', 8'; 106:9; 107:2', 4'–10', r.5'–8'; 108 i' 9'–15', ii' 3'; 109 ii 2', iii 2', r. iii 7', 9', iv 5'. But see SAA 7, 107 r.9' concerning *maqātu*-garments without coloured front part (*lā pūtu*).

34 SAA 7, 106:2, 4; 107:2'; 108 i' 5'; 109 r. iv 2'. In the case of SAA 7, 109 r. iv 2' the garment's rear part is multi-coloured (*birmu*).

35 Layard 1849–1853, I, pl. 65.



motifs,<sup>36</sup> while the most common typology of garment for the goddess shows a flounced structure.<sup>37</sup>

All these details from the Assyrian iconographical evidence about Ištar's vestments show that garments for the goddess could be decorated with a variety of patterns. Some of Ištar's garments in the Eanna temple in Uruk are characterised by tassels(?) (*adīlu*), such as the *kusītu*.<sup>38</sup> The text YBC 943 mentions a certain amount of blue-coloured wool for the fabrication of the tassels(?) aimed at adorning Ištar's *kusītu*.<sup>39</sup> In addition to tassels, golden appliquéés of different shapes were also stitched onto the *kusītu*-garments and the *lubāru mēṭu* head-dresses, as well as to the *nēbeḥu*-belts. In this connection, it is possible that with *ṣubātu ša sādī*, "gold-coloured garment", attested in YOS 7, 183,<sup>40</sup> a garment completely covered with golden bracteates was intended. This also reminds us of what we read in an Assurbanipal's hymn to Ištar of Nineveh, where the goddess is described as clothed with brilliance (*namriri ḥalpat*), bearing a crown gleaming like the stars (*aki kakkabi*), and with luminescent discs (*šanšānāti*) on her breasts shining like the sun.<sup>41</sup> In this case too, it is possible that the author's poetic words were inspired by the vision of the gold-covered garment of Ištar's statue in the sanctuary. Golden appliquéés come in a variety of shapes: lions (*nēṣu*), stars (*kakkabu*), rosettes (*aiaru*), *ḥašū*- and *tenšū*-elements. But these items were not used for all the goddesses, since lions, stars, and *ḥašū*-elements occur as specific decorations for Ištar's *kusītu*-garment, while rosettes and *tenšū*-elements are the preferred appliquéés for Nanāya's dress. That Nanāya's dress was richly decorated is also suggested by the words used by Esarhaddon to describe her magnificence in a text dealing with the renovation of her *cella* in the Eanna temple complex: "adorned with attractiveness and joy and full of glamour".<sup>42</sup> It seems that Nanāya's *kusītu*-dress was also adorned with pomegranate-shaped beads (*nurmū*?).<sup>43</sup> We may suppose that the choice was due to the significance that these elements had in the religious imagery of these goddesses. In fact, Ištar's iconography is always characterised by the figure of the goddess standing on the back of a couchant lion and often encircled by a nimbus of

stars.<sup>44</sup> This nimbus is represented in visual art as a circle with globe- or star-tipped rays and probably represents the *melammu*, the divine radiance of the goddess.<sup>45</sup> It is possible that other metal ornaments mentioned in texts concerning repairing divine statues were appliquéés or sequins to be sewn onto the goddesses' garments, as in the case of the golden scorpion-men figurines (*girtablūlu*) which adorned the statue of in Uruk.<sup>46</sup> These data about appliquéés for garments of divine statues may be compared with what we know from Neo-Assyrian texts. A Neo-Assyrian administrative list enumerating items originating from Babylonian temples mentions rosettes and star-shaped ornaments, probably used as decorations for divine statues or for the garments which covered them. From this text we learn that the statue of the Lady-of-Akkad was decorated by rosettes of gold alloy<sup>47</sup> and star-shaped ornaments.<sup>48</sup> In addition, we know that the practice of adorning the garments of the gods' statues with metal items was widespread in the Ancient Near East. The author of the text of Sargon's Eighth Campaign against Urartu describes the Assyrian plunder of the temple of Ḫaldi; the garments in which the Urartian gods' statues were clad are described as studded with gold discs and rosettes.<sup>49</sup> Neo-Babylonian texts show that these golden items were periodically removed from the statues' garments for repair,<sup>50</sup> cleaning,<sup>51</sup> or recasting.<sup>52</sup> In special cases, these metal attachments could be used for a different purpose: from NBC 4510 we learn that rosettes and *tenšū*-elements were removed from Nanāya's dress in order to make jewels for the adornment of the goddess Kurunnītu.<sup>53</sup> Some golden appliquéés could be temporarily removed from the wardrobe of a goddess and lent to another deity: this is documented in the text NBC 4577, which mentions 86 rosettes and *tenšū*-elements removed from Nanāya in order to adorn the *kusītu* of Ištar.<sup>54</sup> It seems that this practice also applied to the garments themselves; from YOS 6, 71+ it is clear that vestments of a goddess could be used by other goddesses as well: this text shows that *kusītu*s belonging to the wardrobe of Nanāya of Ezida (Borsippa) were lent to Ištar and Nanāya

36 Collon 2001, pl. XIX, no. 240 (89769). For an enlarged vision of this seal, see pl. XXXIII.

37 See, e.g., Collon 2001, pl. XIX, no. 238 (89846), pl. XX, no. 244 (89406), no. 252 (89164), no. 254 (129542), pl. XXII, no. 270 (105113).

38 Beaulieu 2003, 151–159.

39 YBC 9431:2–3. See Beaulieu 2003, 155.

40 YOS 7, 183:7. See Beaulieu 2003, 152.

41 SAA 3, 7:6–8.

42 RINAP 4, 135:1 šá ḪI.LI u ul-ši za-a'-na-tu lu-le-e ma-la-tu.

43 YOS 17, 246:16. But the word is written as *nu-úr*. See Beaulieu 2003, 200.

44 Collon 2001, pl. XIX, no. 240, pl. XX, nos. 252–254, pl. XXII, nos. 270–275.

45 Collon 2001, 138.

46 NCBT 333:1–3. See Beaulieu 2003, 243.

47 SAA 7, 60 i 5–6.

48 SAA 7, 60 ii 11–12.

49 Foster 2005, 810.

50 NCBT 1008, 1251; BIN 2, 125; YBC 9240. See Beaulieu 2003, 22, 24.

51 YOS 6, 117; 17, 248; 19, 269; PTS 2927; NCBT 557. See Beaulieu 2003, 23–25.

52 GCCI 2, 69. See Beaulieu 2003, 23.

53 NBC 4510. See Beaulieu 2003, 23.

54 NBC 4577:3, 9–10. See Beaulieu 2003, 157.



of Uruk.<sup>55</sup> The garments of the Babylonian goddesses could be completely covered with hundreds of these golden items; the number of pieces could be even more than 1400, as may be observed in nine texts stemming from the Eanna archive.<sup>56</sup> The periodical repair of these elements must also be considered in the light of the religious significance of the divine radiance (*melammu*). Since brilliance and luminosity constituted the manifestation of the divinity, the statue of the god had to shine brightly in the *cella*: this explains the importance of changing the god's clothes and polishing or repairing the golden decorations adorning the statue and the vestments themselves.<sup>57</sup> This is why statues' bodies were overlaid with gold, as can be seen from Mār-Ištar's letter informing Esarhaddon about the progress of work on the statues of the Urukian gods Nanāya, Ušur-amāssu, Urkayītu, Anunītu and Palil.<sup>58</sup> Other details on the items of clothing of the goddesses' statues may be found in Neo-Assyrian texts. In an Esarhaddon's royal inscription, for instance, Nanāya is defined as *pussumti ilāti*, "the veiled one among the goddesses",<sup>59</sup> but the term *pusummu/pušunnu* is not otherwise attested in 1st millennium texts.<sup>60</sup> One of the statues mentioned in Mār-Ištar's letter is that of the Babylonian goddess Ušur-amāssu. Interestingly, the divine garment mentioned by the scholar in his message, called *lamaḥuššū*,<sup>61</sup> does not occur in the Neo-Babylonian texts from the Eanna archive, which only attribute to this deity the textiles called *ḥullānu*, *lubāru*, *naḥlaptu*, *našbatu*, *salḫu*, and *šibtu*. However, its use in connection with goddesses is confirmed by a Neo-Babylonian text mentioning one *lamaḥuššū* associated with a veil which was brought to the *bīt ḫilšu* for the goddesses (4INNIN.NA.MEŠ).<sup>62</sup> A number of items of clothing appear as exclusively components of some deities. For instance, Šarrat Sippar is the sole goddess

wearing the *lubār pāni* (a veil?)<sup>63</sup> and the *lubār ḥubbītu* (a soft item of apparel: a veil or a shawl?),<sup>64</sup> while the *lubār qabli* (a loincloth or a belt?) and the *lubār ša šammamu* (a headband?) only occur in Anunītu's wardrobe.<sup>65</sup>

The contemporary Neo-Assyrian glyptic provides useful pieces of information which enable us to identify some of the articles of clothing of Ištar. In representations on seal impressions, the turban of the goddess is a star-topped tall, cylindrical, and horned head-dress with feathered top.<sup>66</sup> Other types of head-gear include a square, horned head-dress with a globe on top<sup>67</sup> or a low, flat-topped type.<sup>68</sup> The head-dress is enriched by a tasselled band hanging down her back.<sup>69</sup> Elements of its decoration are represented by a series of dots in the glyptic,<sup>70</sup> evidently as a simplified rendering of star- or rosette-shaped ornaments that are usually represented in the statuary. In its basic components, her dress is constituted by a short-sleeved fringed robe and what apparently is a fringed kilt.<sup>71</sup> In other representations, her vestments comprise a tiered, striated robe open over a fringed kilt<sup>72</sup> or a grid-and-dot patterned upper garment with a fringed kilt.<sup>73</sup> The vertical striations are also represented as characterised by an undulating structure.<sup>74</sup> A large waist belt is shown on seal impressions;<sup>75</sup> its structure is composed

55 See Beaulieu 2003, 156.

56 AUWE 11, 162; NBC 4504; NCBT 557, 1008; PTS 2539, 2674, 3067; YBC 3438; YOS 6, 117.

57 Walker and Dick 2001, 6.

58 SAA 10, 349:12–16 [šá-kut-tú ša <sup>a</sup>n]a-na-a / ma-aṭ-ṭi-ia-at ù pa-ni ŠU.[2.MEŠ ša <sup>a</sup>u-šur]—a-mat-sa / KUG.GI uḫ-ḫu-zu la-a-nu 'ù' [GÌR.2.MEŠ] / KUG.GI la uḫ-ḫu-zu TÚG.la-[ma-ḫuš-šu-u lab]-šá-at / a-gu-ú KUG.GI šak-na-at, "[The decoration of N]anāya is incomplete. Furthermore, (while) the face and the hand[s of Ušur]-amāssa have been overlaid with gold, the figure and [the feet] have not. She is [dr]essed with a la[maḥuššū]-robe and equipped with a golden tiara."

59 RINAP 4, 135:1.

60 CAD P, 537b quotes Old and Middle Assyrian attestations.

61 SAA 10, 349:15.

62 TCL 13, 233:4. It is also important to note that a *lamaḥuššū* for statues (TÚG.NÍG.LÁM.BÁN.DA ša šalmi) is mentioned in the lexical list *Ḥarra ḥubullu* XIX, 117ff. For these attestations see CAD L, 59a s.v.

63 Zawadzki 2013, nos. 193 r.15; 195:11; 196 r.20; 200:11; 203 r.13; 205 r.11'; 210 r.17; 212 r.14; 228:13; 231:15; 237 r.6'; 254 r.8'; 262 r.6'; 274:4'; 452:2. According to Zawadzki, this item of clothing was a veil. See *ibid.*, 182.

64 Zawadzki 2013, no. 495:2. The textile designation *ḥubbītu*, not translated by Zawadzki, must be connected to the verb *ḥabū* II, "to be soft". The same item of clothing was called with the term *ḥubbutu*, attested in *ibid.*, no. 489:2. Both the *lubār ḥubbītu* and the *ḥubbutu* were made of blue-purple coloured wool and destined to Šarrat Sippar.

65 For the *lubār qabli* see Zawadzki 2013, nos. 67 r.26; 165 r.4'; 167 r.13; 221 r.13; 222 r.5'; 225 r.2'; 290 r.25; 291:13; 441 r.11; 472:2. In Zawadzki 2006, 123 the term is translated as "belt". The *lubār ša šammamu* is documented in *ibid.*, nos. 221 r.14; 222 r.6'; 253 r.3'; 275:14. Perhaps, Anunītu is also intended in *ibid.*, no. 284 r.10'. The interpretation that the *lubār ša šammamu* was a headband is put forward by Zawadzki. See Zawadzki 2006, 124.

66 Collon 2001, no. 240.

67 Collon 2001, no. 252.

68 Collon 2001, no. 254.

69 Collon 2001, nos. 240, 248, 250, 252.

70 Collon 2001, no. 240.

71 Collon 2001, no. 240.

72 Collon 2001, nos. 252–254, 270, 271.

73 Collon 2001, no. 253.

74 Collon 2001, no. 253.

75 Collon 2001, nos. 240, 244, 248, 251–254.

by horizontal bands or striations,<sup>76</sup> probably indicating the large and thick borders characterising it. There must have been differences in the wardrobe of Assyrian and Babylonian goddesses, but the evidence provided by the Neo-Assyrian glyptic is in any case instructive as regards the basic components of the clothes of female deities in the 1st millennium. From these iconographical details, we may suggest that the short-sleeved, long fringed and open robe can be identified as the outer garment or wrap respectively called *naḥlaptu* and *ḥullānu* in the texts, while the so-called “fringed kilt” was the visible part of a short tunic, in all likelihood to be identified with the *kusītu*. The turban was called *paršīgu* and *lubāru kulūlu*, while the *eru* is probably to be identified with the tasselled band hanging down her back. The *paršīgu* head-dress is often described as having front rosettes in the Ebabbar texts.<sup>77</sup> The candidate for the belt of the goddess is the word *nēbeḥu*, although terms designating scarves and sashes (*guḥalšu*, *ḥuṣannu*, and *mēzeḥu*) could be other names for this element of clothing. Finally, the tassels that accompanied both the garments and the headband could be represented by the word *adīlu*. Gold lion-shaped elements, which are frequently mentioned in texts concerning decorations of Ištar’s dress,<sup>78</sup> were attached as appliqués to the *nēbeḥu* of her garment, as witnessed by the reference given in PTS 2927.<sup>79</sup> From other Neo-Babylonian texts, we see that these lion-shaped ornaments also served to decorate the *lubāru mēṭu* of Bēltu-ša-Rēš, with quantities ranging from 14/15 to 25 pieces.<sup>80</sup>

### The wardrobe of male deities

From the Neo-Babylonian Ebabbar temple archive in Sippar we get analogous pieces of information about the garments of male deities. Garments are documented for many gods, some of which were worshipped also in Uruk, as already observed. These are Adad, Aḫlamītu ša Anunītu, Anunītu, Aya, Bēl, Bunene, Dumuzi, Gula, Immertu, Ištar-šamē, Marduk, Nabû, Nergal, Šala, Šamaš, Šarrat Sippar, a group of goddesses collectively referred to as “The Daughters of Ebabbar”, and the Ziqqurra. In comparison with the Eanna evidence, in the case of the Ebabbar texts we get a clearer idea about the wardrobes of male deities, especially of Šamaš, the god of sun and justice, who was the main god

venerated in Sippar. The garments of Šamaš include a large variety of vestments (*ḥullānu*, *lubāru*, *lubār mē damqi*, *lubāru ziqqu*, SAG, *salḥu*, *sūnu*, *šibtu*),<sup>81</sup> head-dresses (*lubār kulūlu*, *lubār mē qaqqadi*, *lubār mēṭu*, *muttatu*, *paršīgu*),<sup>82</sup> sashes and scarves (*guḥalšu*, *ḥuṣannu*),<sup>83</sup> and belts (*nēbeḥu*, *patinnu*).<sup>84</sup> Most of these textiles were also used to cover images of other gods, like Aya, Šarrat Sippar, and Bunene. The wardrobe (TÚG.NÍG.MU4) of the Sun-god is treated in detail in a text of the time of Nabû-apal-iddina, king of Babylon (c. 887–855 BCE); this document regulates the change of the god’s garments according to the months of the Sippar religious calendar. According to this text, on the 7th day of Nisannu (March–April) the god wore two linen *salḥu*-tunics, four *šibtu*-garments of *kitinnu*-material, one *ḥullānu*-cloak, two linen *mēzeḥu*-sashes, seven *ḥuṣannu*-sashes, one tied *nēbeḥu*-belt, one red *patinnu*-belt, one *lubāru*-garment, one *lubār ziqqu*-garment, one blue-purple *kulūlu*-headband with golden ornament fastened on it, and

81 *Ḥullānu*: Zawadzki 2013, nos. 184:3; 186:4; 187:4; 189:3; 190:4; 191:2; 195:3; 196:5; 197:5; 200:3; 201:3; 202:3; 203:3; 204:2’; 206:2’; 207:1’; 209:4; 210:4; 211:2’; 212:4; 217:4; 219:5; 220:4; 221:3 and passim; *lubāru*: *ibid.*, nos. 30:1; 34:1; 52:3; 69:4; 75:4; 76:4; 77:3; 82:5; 90:2’; 108:4; 111:4; 112:4; 114:3; 116:4; 123:4; 126:4; 132:1’ and passim; *lubār mē damqi* (or *lubāru ziqqu/ziqqu/mesiqu?*): *ibid.*, nos. 1:3; 2:2; 30:2; 34:2; 35:2’; 38:2’; 108:8; 156:4’(?) ; 290:7; SAG: *ibid.* nos. 104:9; 106 r.15; 229:4; 242:5; 418:7; 535 r.8; *salḥu*: *ibid.*, nos. 180:1; 187:4; 191:2; 195:3; 200:3; 203:3; 210:4; 219:5; 221:3; 225:4; 242:4; 243:4; 257:5’; 292 r.15; 332:4, r.3’; 359:2; CT 55, 823:1; *sūnu*: *ibid.*, nos. 1:3; 2:3; 3:3; 5:3; 6:7; 7:9; 8 r.8; 9:3; 11:3; 18:4; 21:3; 22:3; 23:2 and passim; *šibtu*: *ibid.*, nos. 1:2; 2:2; 3:2; 6:6; 10:2; 11:2; 12 r.14; 18:3; 19:2; 23:2; 24:2; 28:2; 30:1; 34:1; 50:4; 52:4; 54:5; 57:4; 63:6 and passim.

82 *Lubār kulūlu*: Zawadzki 2013, nos. 43:1; 67 r.18; 71 r.13; 76 r.6’; 82:12; 163 r. i 8’; 170:5; 172:5; 177:5; 178:6; 185:4; 186:5 and passim; *lubār mē qaqqadi*: *ibid.*, nos. 77:5; 111:6 (abbreviated as TÚG, instead of TÚG.ḪIA); 112:6; 116:6; 123:6; *lubār mēṭu*: *ibid.*, nos. 71 r.12; 77 r.22; 163 r. i 7’; 170:5; 172:5; 178:1; 183:6’; 185:4; 186:6 and passim; *muttatu*: *ibid.*, nos. 5 r.9; 220:5; 226:3(?); 229a:4(?); 231:2; 232:4; 234:1’(?); 348:1; 484a:7; 504:3; 591 r.13(?); BM 64129:2; *paršīgu*: *ibid.*, nos. 195:4; 203 r.13; 228:5.

83 *Guḥalšu*: Zawadzki 2013, nos. 176:5; 183:4’; 184:3; 185:3; 186:4; 187:4; 189:3; 190:5; 191:3; 195:3; 196:6; 197:5; 200:3; 201:3; 202:3; 203:3; 204:2’; 206:2’; 212:4 and passim; *ḥuṣannu*: *ibid.*, nos. 30:3; 49:4’(?) ; 50:6(?); 57:6; 58:7; 71:7; 72:7(?); 86:6; 88:8; 90:4’; 100:3; 101:5; 102:7 and passim.

84 For the Sun-god’s *nēbeḥu* see Zawadzki 2013, nos. 63:9; 170:4; 171:8’; 175:6; 177:4’; 178:3; 183:2’; 184:4; 189:4; 190:5; 193:5; 195:4; 196:7; 198:4; 200:4; 203:4; 204:3’ and passim. The *patinnu* is attested in *ibid.*, nos. 67 r.19; 180:13; 187:5(?); 190:5; 193:4; 196:6; 200:4; 210:5; 217:5; 218:3; 219:6; 221:4; 228:5; 229a:4(?); 237:6; 239:5; 247:1’; 287:10(?); 292 r.16; 597:2; Nbn 410:5.

76 Collon 2001, nos. 240, 254.

77 Zawadzki 2013, no. 42:3–4. See also *ibid.*, nos. 174 r.1’; 200 e.12.

78 See, e.g., GCCI 2, 133, 367. See Beaulieu 2003, 23.

79 PTS 2927:3. The number of lion-shaped elements that was needed to decorate the *nēbeḥu* of Ištar corresponded to 15 units. See Beaulieu 2003, 156.

80 NCBT 557, 1251, 1451, PTS 2927, YBC 9031. See Beaulieu 2003, 24–25, 220.

one blue-purple *lubāru*-garment with a golden ornament in shape of the gate fastened to it.<sup>85</sup> The same suit of clothes characterises the 10th day of Ayyāru (April–May) and the 15th of Araḥsamnu (October–November). Instead, for the 3rd of Ulūlu (August–September), as well as for the 7th of Tašrītu (September–October) and the 15th of Addāru (February–March), we find some of the above-mentioned items (i.e., *salḫu*, *šibtu*, *ḫullānu*, *mēzeḫu*, *ḫuṣannu*, *patinnu*, and *lubāru*) with the addition of one red *muttatu*-headband and blue-purple yarn of *byssus*.<sup>86</sup> It seems that the use of the *muttatu* was restricted to Šamaš;<sup>87</sup> it probably consisted in a headband<sup>88</sup> which differentiated from analogous items for its decoration or manufacture and, as such, stressed the dominant position of this god over the other deities of Sippar. According to Zawadzki's interpretation, the basic item of clothing of the Sun-god was a tunic, which was placed on the body of the statue. Other items were then added on this basic apparel, such as a coat, a scarf, a belt and a head-dress.<sup>89</sup> A visual representation of the Sun-god and his clothes in the 1st millennium may be seen on the top of a limestone tablet from Sippar. This object shows the introduction of King Nabû-apal-iddina into the presence of the god of justice. The Sun-god is represented as seated on the throne within the Ebabbar temple and as wearing a horned tiara and a long short-sleeved tunic with undulating and striped design.<sup>90</sup> In this scene the apparel of Šamaš is limited to two basic components, the tunic and the head-dress, probably to be identified with some of the textile designations mentioned in the Ebabbar texts, while no sash or belt adorns his seated statue.

As regards *kusītus*, “overcoats”, it seems that the presence of this item of attire characterised both male and female deities' wardrobes, the main difference being that the gods' *kusītus* were generally white, while the goddesses' ones were multi-coloured and enriched by sequins.<sup>91</sup> The fact that the preferred colour of the costumes of Šamaš was white

may be connected to the traditional imagery of this god in the Mesopotamian theological thought, according to which the nature of the god was characterised by luminosity and brilliance. This trait of his personality enables him to see everything and, consequently, he is regarded as the god of truth and justice. In a hymn to the Sun-god in favour of Assurbanipal, Šamaš is described as “Light of the Great Gods, Light of Earth”.<sup>92</sup> The same idea is probably at the basis of the name of his sanctuary in Sippar and Larsa; in fact, E-babbar simply means “White House”.

To judge from the extant written sources dealing with divine garments, the costumes of other Babylonian deities were not so different from the ones of Šamaš, but the data about them are limited in comparison with those concerning the Sun-god's wardrobe. For example, according to the Ebabbar archive, linen *kibsu*-fabric was assigned to Marduk and Bēltiya.<sup>93</sup> It is difficult to believe that the wardrobe belonging to the statue of Marduk, the head of the Babylonian pantheon who was especially worshipped in the Esagil temple in Babylon, was limited to this item of attire.<sup>94</sup>

But this has probably to do with the nature of sources which, in the case of the Sippar archive, are primarily focused on the Sun-god's clothes. In an Assyrian theological commentary and in the Ninevite version of the “Marduk Ordeal” the outfit of Marduk (Bēl) is indicated with the term *šer'itu*.<sup>95</sup> After defeating Tīāmat, the primeval sea monster, Marduk is described as wearing a “princely robe” in the *Enūma eliš*.<sup>96</sup> As evident from the *Erra Epic*, the deteriorated and dirty garment of the god's statue affects not only the image, which loses its divine brilliance and the manifestation of the god's *melammu*, but also the status of the god himself, who could abandon his image and temple.<sup>97</sup> The scarce documentary data about his costumes certainly reflects the low position that he had in Sippar theology. As for Adad, the components of his attire are poorly documented in the two temple archives of Uruk and Sippar. A document from the Eanna textual evidence informs us about the disbursement of red- and blue-coloured wool for this deity, presumably used

85 Zawadzki 2013, no. 175:3–11.

86 Zawadzki 2013, no. 175:12–16.

87 See fn. 81 for the attestations.

88 However, note that the female term *muttatu* is listed in CAD M/II, 310b s.v. *muttatu* A, “half, halfpack”, although it is etymologically linked to the word *muttu*, “front (part)”. This etymological connection is not indicated in the dictionaries. Also note that Zawadzki's arguments supporting the interpretation that this item was a “head-dress” are solely based on the analysis of the position of the *muttatu* in the *miḫṣu tenū* lists. See Zawadzki 2006, 132.

89 Zawadzki 2013, 539.

90 For a picture of the Sun-god tablet in the British Museum image catalogue (object ref. no. 1881,0428.34a 91000) see <http://www.bmimages.com/results.asp?image=00871293001&image=141&searchnum=0006>.

91 Zawadzki 2013, 539.

92 Castellino 1977, 429. These aspects of the god's nature are also treated in one of the more stylistically-elaborated hymnic compositions of the end of the Kassite period, see *ibid.*, 385–387, 391.

93 Zawadzki 2013, nos. 328:12; 333:8'.

94 A statue of Marduk with the characteristic spade is represented on a relief from Nineveh. See Layard 1849–1853, I, pl. 67A. In the scene, the Babylonian god wears a long short-sleeved tunic with fringed border, a waist belt and a horned tiara.

95 SAA 3, 35:21.

96 Pettinato 2005, 134, line V, 93. In a hymn of Assurbanipal, he is described as the one who “excels in form, most high in stature and magnificent in his lordly apparel” (SAA 3, 2:25).

97 Pettinato 2005, 248, lines I, 127–129, 250, lines I, 180–181.

to fabricate a *salḫu*-garment.<sup>98</sup> This is in line with what we know from Neo-Assyrian sources: a letter of Esarhaddon's correspondence mentions multi-coloured garments (*birmu*) for Adad's statue.<sup>99</sup> A clearer idea of his wardrobe may be obtained from the Ebabbar documentation, according to which the statue of the Storm-god was clothed with vestments called *lubāru*, *salḫu*, *sūnu*, *šibtu*, and *pašīru*;<sup>100</sup> sashes like *guḫalšu* and *ḫuṣannu*;<sup>101</sup> head-dresses like *paršīgu*, *kulūlu*, and *lubār mēṭu*;<sup>102</sup> belts like *patinnu* and *nēbeḫu*.<sup>103</sup> Adad is also the recipient of *kibsu*-cloth.<sup>104</sup> Like in the case of Šamaš and Anunītu, this fabric was used to fabricate the god's *sūnu*,<sup>105</sup> a piece of clothing which is usually translated by scholars as "loincloth",<sup>106</sup> but which

probably indicated various band-like textiles of different uses.<sup>107</sup> It is tempting to explain the lack of the *ḫullānu*, an outer garment, in his wardrobe in connection with the deity's role as a weather god,<sup>108</sup> but further data are needed to confirm this interpretation. If we take into consideration the Neo-Assyrian iconographical evidence concerning this deity we see that Adad is generally represented as wearing the same attire as the other male gods. In the Malta rock relief, for example, the Storm-god is represented with a cylindrical horned tiara and a long wrap or shawl covering a long tunic like the other deities.<sup>109</sup> Differently, on a cylinder seal impression his costumes include a knee-length tunic which is covered by a long outer garment.<sup>110</sup> Instead, in a scene of divine procession on a relief from the Southwest Palace at Nineveh, the standing statue of Adad is depicted wearing a knee-length garment with short sleeves and a large waist belt, both elements resembling the typical dress items of Assyrian soldiers (Fig. 14.2). The overall surface of his dress is decorated by square-shaped elements which are similar to the ones adorning the goddesses' statues in the same scene. In addition, in the Ninevite relief the Storm-god is represented without the typical divine tiara, although the horns are present on his head. If the comparison with the Neo-Assyrian iconography of the Storm-god is valid, we may state that the Ninevite representation of Adad, where the outer garment is lacking, is not only a clear pictorial counterpart of the Neo-Babylonian imagery of this god that we get from the Ebabbar texts, but, more importantly, it confirms on iconographical grounds the lack of the *ḫullānu* in Adad's Babylonian attire. Bunene is another important deity of the Babylonian pantheon. He was the son and the divine charioteer of the Sun-god. Garments (*ḫullānu*, *lubāru*, *salḫu*, *šibtu*, *sūnu*),<sup>111</sup> head-dresses (*lubār kulūlu*, *lubār mēṭu*,

98 YBC 3561:10–12 SÍG.ṭa<sup>2</sup>-bar-ru / SÍG.ZA.GÌN.KUR.RA ṭ x x<sup>2</sup> GADA<sup>2</sup>.sal-hu / ṭ a-na<sup>2</sup> ṭIM ṣu-bi-la-na-a-šú, "Bring us red- and blue-coloured wool for one linen(?) *salḫu*-garment for Adad". See Beaulieu 2003, 326.

99 SAA 16, 84 r.12–13.

100 For the *lubāru*-garments, see Zawadzki 2013, nos. 68 r.4'; 288:4. The other items of clothing are attested in the following texts: *salḫu*: *ibid.*, nos. 195 r.14; 200 r.15; 203 r.17; 210 r.22; 221 r.17; *sūnu*: *ibid.*, nos. 4:5; 11:9; 16:8; 18 e.8; 19 e.8; 25 r.3'; 34:7; 50:11 and passim; *šibtu*: *ibid.*, nos. 63 r.5'; 66 r.15; 81 r.14; 161 r.9; 581:2; *pašīru*: *ibid.*, no. 82 r.22.

101 For the *guḫalšu* see Zawadzki 2013, nos. 184 r.12; 190 r.3'; 193 r.19; 195 r.14; 196 r.23; 197 r.2'; 200 r.15; 203 r.17; 210 r.22; 212 r.19; 214 r.11'; 214 r.11'; 221 r.17; 222 r.8'; 228 r.16; 229 r.18; 233 r.14'; 239 r.2'; 246:7'; 248 r.9'; 251 r.12'; 259 r.14; 268 r.13'; 278 r.2'; 292 r.24. The *ḫuṣannu* is attested in *ibid.*, nos. 49:7'; 50:10; 58 e.11; 62:9'; 76 r.2; 85 r.14; 91 r.15; 101 r.5'; 131 r.12'; 136 r.7'; 143:7; 147 r.10; 148 r.7'; 150 r.9'; 288:5; 293 i 9'; 294 i 1', r. ii 9'; 297 i 16', r. ii 20'; 301:6; 305:7; 307:4'.

102 *Paršīgu*: Zawadzki 2013, nos. 67 r.17; 76 r.8'; 91:14; 147 r.12; 150 r.11'; 188 r.8; 287:7; Cam 413:16; *kulūlu*: *ibid.*, nos. 63 r.6'; 67 r.25; 170 r.19; 172 r.12; 177 e.9; 178:17; 181 r.5'; 287 r.16; 378 r.8'; *lubār mēṭu*: *ibid.*, nos. 67 r.25; 170 r.18; 172 r.11; 178:18; 277 r.3'; 284a r.8'; 287 r.16; 350 r.1'; BM 62915 r.2; CT 55, 808 r.5'.

103 *Patinnu*: Zawadzki 2013, nos. 193 r.19; 196 r.23; 200 r.15; 210 r.22; 214 r.11'; 221 r.17; 228 r.16; 239 r.1'; 246:8'; 253 r.6'; 256 r.9'; 265 r.10'; 268 r.13'; 280 r.8'; 292 r.24; *nēbeḫu*: *ibid.*, nos. 184 r.13; 190 r.3'; 193 r.20; 195 r.14; 196 r.24; 198 r.8'; 200 r.16; 203 r.17; 210 r.23; 212 r.19; 221 r.18; 222 r.8'; 228 r.16; 229 r.18; 232 r.16; 233 r.14'; 246:7'; 251 r.12'; 259 r.15; 278 r.3'; 280 r.8'.

104 Zawadzki 2013, nos. 337 r.6'; 344 r.9'. Linen *kibsu*-cloth for this deity is attested in *ibid.*, nos. 320 r.3'; 325 r.22; 326 r.26; 329:19, r.30; 333 r.2'; 335 r.17'; 337 r.6'; 339 r.5'.

105 Zawadzki 2013, nos. 315 r.4' 1 GADA *kib-su* šá ŪR a-na ṭIM. See also no. 337 r.4'. For the *sūnu* of *kibsu*-cloth for Šamaš and Anunītu see *ibid.*, nos. 315 r.3'–4'; 321 r.5'–6'; 325 r.25–26.

106 See AEAD, 101b.

107 Note that the term *sūnu* is used in Mari and Middle Assyrian texts to designate (band-like?) parts of garments. See CAD S, 389b s.v. *sūnu* B b. Zawadzki prefers to translate the term as "belt". See Zawadzki 2013, 21 and passim.

108 Zawadzki 2006, 196.

109 Thureau-Dangin 1924, 187.

110 A picture of this seal (BM 132257) is reproduced in Livingstone 1989, 2 fig. 1.

111 For Bunene's *ḫullānu*, see Zawadzki 2013, nos. 189:7; 193:8; 195:8; 196:14; 201:7; 203:7; 205:7'; 208:10'; 210:13; 212:8; 214 r.8'; 221:7; 228:8; 229:10; 232:7; 233:8'; 236:7'; 246:5'; 249:3'; 254:2'; 264:10; 265:6'; 274:1'; 290 r.21; 291:8; 292 r.21. *Lubāru*-garments for this deity are attested in *ibid.*, nos. 1:5; 3:5; 6:9; 18:6; 19:5; 23:5; 24:7; 25 r.1; 27:4; 28:4; 30:4; 34:5; 50:8; 54 r.10; 64:6; 69:9; 103 r.13'; 108:10; 112 r.11; 117 r.12; 123 r.16; 132 e.7'; 146 r.11'; 293 i 7'; 294 i 7'; 295 i 4'; 297 i 2, 14', r. i 16', ii 19'; 298:2'(?); 305:5; 308:6; 312:6'; 484a:8; 507:4. For the *salḫu* see *ibid.*, nos. 193:8; 195:8; 196:14; 205:7'; 208:10'; 210:13; 214 r.8'; 228:8; 229:10; 236:7'; 246:5'; 249:3'; 254:2'; 290 r.21; 359:2; Dar 62:8;



*paršīgu*),<sup>112</sup> sashes (*guḥalšu*, *huṣannu*),<sup>113</sup> and belts (*nēbeḥu*, *patinnu*)<sup>114</sup> worn by this god are the same characterising the Sungod's attire. The fact that the *lubāru* and the *šibtu* of this god were lighter than the ones of Šamaš leads Zawadzki to suggest that Bunene was worshipped as the child of Šamaš and Aya.<sup>115</sup> This means that family ties among the gods were reflected by divine vestments. It has been suggested that his attire consisted in a short jacket with short sleeves, and a dress probably appropriate to his role as driver of the Sun-god's chariot.<sup>116</sup> Colours of garments were certainly used to mark the specific traits of the god's personality and his family and rank relations with other deities. In fact, another peculiarity of Bunene's attire is the *paršīgu* head-dress, which only for this deity was white (*pešū*),<sup>117</sup> while that of the Sun-god was red (*tabarru*).

Nbn 252:1 and passim. The *šibtu*-garment is documented in *ibid.*, nos. 1:5; 3:5; 6:9; 12 r.14; 18:6; 19:5; 23:5; 27:4; 28:4; 30:4; 34:5; 50:8; 52:9; 54 r.10; 58:10; 66:9; 69:9; 102:10; 103 r.15'; 112 r.11; 117 r.12; 122 e.12; 123 r.16; 127 e.7; 132 e.7'; 146 r.12'; 150:4'; 290:12. For the *sūnu* see *ibid.*, nos. 16 r.15; 19:3; 24 r.13; 49:8'; 54 r.12; 59 r.15; 76 r.3'; 118 r.11; 123 r.14; 139 r.2'; 146 r.9'; 293 r. ii 4'; 294 i 9'; 297 i 4', r. ii 4'; 299:5'; 301 r.13; 304:4; 306 r.15; 308:6.

112 *Lubār kulūlu*: Zawadzki 2013, nos. 163 r. ii 14'; 178:15; 181 r.4'; 284a r.6'; 287 r.18; 288 r.13; 514:5; BM 51422:8'; BM 101133:5; Cam 66:4; *lubār mēṭu*: *ibid.*, nos. 163 r. ii 13'; 170:10; 178:14; 181 r.4'; 284a r.7'; 287 r.19; 288 r.14; 484a:9; BM 50342 r.6'; BM 51422:8; BM 101133:8; Cyr 259:3; *paršīgu*: *ibid.*, nos. 87 r.12; 293 r. ii 5'; 294 i 9'; 295 i 6'; 297 i 4', r. ii 4'; 299:5; 304:4; 351:3'; Cam 156:3.

113 For Bunene's *guḥalšu* see Zawadzki 2013, nos. 176:6; 184:8; 189:7; 192:4; 193:8; 195:8; 196:14; 201:7; 203:7; 204:7'; 205:8; 208 e.11'; 210:13; 212:8; 214 r.8'; 218:9; 221:7; 228:8; 229:11; 232:7; 233:8'; 236:7'; 240:9; 246:5'; 249:4'; 252:7'; 254:3'; 256:4'; 262:1'; 264:11; 265:6'; 274:1'; 286:3'; 290 r.21; 291:8; 292 r.21. The *ḥusannu* is attested in *ibid.*, nos. 143:8; 293 r. ii 4'; 294 i 9'; 297 r. ii 4'; 301:13.

114 *Nēbeḥu*: Zawadzki 2013, nos. 170:9; 178:12; 180:15; 184:9; 193:9; 195:9; 196:15; 203:8; 204:7'; 205:7'; 210:14; 214 r.9'; 228:9; 229:10; 232:8; 236:7'; 249:4' and passim; *patinnu*: *ibid.*, nos. 67 r.19; 176:6; 180:14; 184:8; 193:9; 195:8; 196:15; 203:8; 204:7'; 208 e.11'; 210:14; 214 r.9'; 218:9; 228:8; 229:10; 231:8; 232:8; 233:8; 236:7'; 246:6'; 249:4'; 254:3'; 256:4'; 268:5'; 287 r.18; 290 r.21; 291:8; 292 r.21.

115 Zawadzki 2006, 195. The same considerations apply to other items of clothing of the Sun-god's son and charioteer. See, for instance, the weight of the *patinnu*-belt, which is 12 shekels in the case of Šamaš (Nbn 410:5) and only five shekels in the case of Bunene (*ibid.* 6). Another case is given the KUR.RA-garment, whose weight corresponded to 30 shekels in the case of the Sun-god (Zawadzki 2013, no. 455:3–4) and only six shekels in that of the divine chariot driver (*ibid.*, 5–e.6).

116 Zawadzki 2006, 195.

117 Zawadzki 2013, nos. 293 r. ii 5'; 294 i 9'; 295 i 6'; 297 i 4', r. ii 4'.

After this review of the evidence for costumes worn by the most important Mesopotamian deities of the 1st millennium, we wonder which elements of clothing were used for the head of the Assyrian pantheon, the god Aššur. The arrangement of the clothing of his statue may be supposed on the basis of a reference to the god's old garments in a text dealing with cultic practices in Assur.<sup>118</sup> According to this passage, it seems that not only the statue of the national god of the Assyrians was clothed, but also that his clothes were used to cover the *simulacra* of other Assyrian deities. This probably has to do with the special personality of Aššur, who had absorbed many features of other deities, primarily Enlil, Anu and Šamaš,<sup>119</sup> thus becoming a universal god in the imperial phase of the Assyrian history. As a working hypothesis, we may suggest that the vestments adorning his statue were characterised by items of clothing whose colours and decorations were those of other important gods of the Assyrian pantheon, especially the so-called "Great Gods". In this way, the theological concept of the divinity of Aššur as the sum total of the gods was probably stressed.<sup>120</sup>

Other elements of clothing attested in Neo-Babylonian texts appear to be destined to both male and female deities. For example, according to the document NCBT 377, the gods Nabû and Nanāya received tassels(?) (*adīlu*) and *našbatu*-garments of red-purple wool.<sup>121</sup> We do not know whether the *adīlu*-elements were then added to the *našbatus* or to other items of clothing of these deities. What is interesting to observe is that *adīlus* were not an exclusive element of goddesses' attire. Secondly, Nabû's statue also received silver shoes (KUŠ.E.SĪR KUG.UD),<sup>122</sup> in all likelihood because of his role as a swift god. In fact, he was known in Assyria as "Nabû of the footrace" (*Nabû ša lismi*) and a special celebration taking place in the city of Assur in the month Ayyāru was called *ūm lismi ša Nabû*,

118 Menzel 1981, no. 35 r. vii 41'–43' *i-na* UGU *ku-zip-pi'* SUN.MEŠ *šā aš-šur* GĪD.DA UD<sup>1</sup>-me' / *i-na-āš-šū-u-ni a-na* DINGIR.MEŠ *šā ina* IGI LUGAL / *ma-ḥir-u-ni ú-kāt-tu-mu* *dul-lu e-piš* 'DUG.GA', "Concerning the old garments that Aššur wears (since) a long time, they cover (with them) the gods who are acceptable to the king. An extispicy was performed and it was favourable".

119 Leick 1991, 15.

120 To judge, for example, from the representation of Aššur in the Malta rock relief (Thureau-Dangin 1924, 187), his attire consisted in the same items of clothing worn by the other deities. Evidently, it was the combination of colours in his attire which stressed Aššur's pre-eminent position in the Assyrian pantheon. On the concept of sum total of the gods in the Assyrian religion, see Parpola 2000, 171–172.

121 NCBT 377:1–5. See Beaulieu 2003, 344.

122 YOS 19, 212:2. See Beaulieu 2003, 343.

“day of the footrace of Nabû”.<sup>123</sup> Another important divine being venerated in Uruk and Sippar was Dumuzi, the divine shepherd whose mythical death was celebrated during the month bearing his name, *i.e.*, Du’ūzu (June–July), and the subsequent month, called Abu (July–August). In the Mesopotamian mythological tradition he is the lover of Inanna/Ištar; he is chosen as the substitute of the goddess to enable her to exit the Netherworld. Not differently from the gods’ statues in the Eanna, also his image (*šalam* <sup>d</sup>DUMU. ZI) was honoured through a clothing ceremony. However, details on his garments are limited to some textile materials and only to two pieces of clothing. A text from the Eanna lists one half mina of white woven cloth for one loincloth (*sūnu*) and small amounts of few shekels of white, red, and blue-coloured thread.<sup>124</sup> That the *sūnu*-textile was a peculiarity of Dumuzi’s attire is also evident from another document from the same archive.<sup>125</sup> The possibility that the term *sūnu* refers to a loincloth or to a band-like cloth fits well the imagery of a young shepherd only wearing few and simple articles of clothing. The Ebabbar documents complete the picture about his wardrobe; from one text we learn that also the *hušannu*-sash was associated to Dumuzi.<sup>126</sup> Presumably, his clothes were not limited to the *sūnu* and the *hušannu*. In all likelihood, the ritual clothing of his body, which commemorated the moment of his death, involved a luxury robe appropriate for a marriage ceremony. In fact, in the poem of *Ištar’s Descent to the Netherworld*, Geštinanna’s brother is bathed, anointed with scented oil, and clothed with a red garment.<sup>127</sup> This garment was also aimed at covering the naked body of the shepherd; in fact, in the episode of his escape from the demons, Dumuzi loses his clothes and waist belt.<sup>128</sup>

There were also deities whose attire was enriched by the presence of a *taḥapšu*. This may be observed in the case of the gods worshipped in Sippar. This Hurrian loanword designates in Akkadian a wool or linen blanket or stole<sup>129</sup> and appears in association with both male and female gods (*i.e.*, Šamaš, Adad, Bunene, Aya, Anunītu, Gula, Šarrat Sippar, Šala, Immertu, Ušur-amāssu, and Urkayītu). However, it is not easy to understand its exact function and how it was combined with the other divine articles of clothing on the statue’s body or with paraphernalia. This linen textile

was made of *kibsu*,<sup>130</sup> possibly a type of woven cloth, or of *salḫu*.<sup>131</sup> The latter usually indicates a garment, but it is possible that the term also refers to a peculiarity of the *salḫus*, perhaps given by their decoration or technique used to produce them. The term may be connected with the verb *salāḫu*, “to moisten, wet”, which is used in Assyrian medical texts to indicate the operation of saturating a cloth with liquid substances.<sup>132</sup> Accordingly, we can suggest that the Neo-Babylonian *salḫu* was probably a kind of fabric whose structure was made denser through kneading and stomping it in wet and warm conditions.<sup>133</sup> A text from the Ebabbar archive mentions new *salḫus* for the baldachin of Šamaš,<sup>134</sup> but it is not clear whether it refers to the material used for the baldachin, namely the same fabric used for the *salḫu*-garments, or to a type of *salḫu* used as nightdress for the Sun-god’s statue. Interestingly, the *salḫu* was also used to produce *kibsu*-fabric.<sup>135</sup> The fact that *kibsu*-fabric could be made of *salḫu* and that both *salḫu* and *kibsu* could be used to fabricate the *taḥapšu* leads Zawadzki to conclude that the divine cover was made of old used textiles.<sup>136</sup> It is also possible that the terms *salḫu* and *kibsu* designated specific types of woven fabric. Also the *taḥapšu* was periodically cleaned; from one text we are informed about the cleaning operations concerning the blanket of the goddesses Ušur-amāssu and Urkayītu.<sup>137</sup> According to the text, a weaver receives a quantity of juniper extract in connection with the *taḥapšu*, but the document does not clarify whether it was used as a dyeing substance or as a scent for the sacred blanket.<sup>138</sup> Other items of clothing were certainly used in 1st millennium temples, but the attestations in the extant sources do not give us details about their specific destination. In Assyria, for instance, we find the garment called *kindabasi*; its connection with the cultic sphere is suggested by its mention in an inventory text dealing with offering materials,

123 Parpola 1983, 55–56; Beaulieu 2003, 344.

124 GCCI 2, 108:1–5. See Beaulieu 2003, 336.

125 PTS 3257:1–3. See Beaulieu 2003, 336.

126 Zawadzki 2013, no. 427 r.11’.

127 Pettinato 2005, 461, lines 127–129.

128 Bottéro and Kramer 1992, 331, lines 86–87.

129 CAD T, 40b s.v. Note that Zawadzki prefers to translate the term as “cover”.

130 Zawadzki 2013, nos. 181:9; 314 r.14’–15’; 319:5’–r.9’; 321:12–13; 322:6’–12’; 325:12–15; 326:13–16, r.18; 327 r.20–21, 23, 25; 328 r.23–26; 331:4–6; 333 r. 4’–6’; 335:7’–9’.

131 Zawadzki 2013, nos. 314:7’–9’, 11’–13’; 316:14–16; 319 r.15’; 321:9–12; 322:6’–7’; 324 r.15–17; 325:9–11; 326:10–12; 327:10–12; 328:8–10; 329:5, 7; 335:3’–6’.

132 AMT 74 ii 35; BAM 3 iv 19. See CAD S, 86b s.v. *salāḫu* A 1c.

133 On this technical procedure, see Andersson Strand 2010, 20–21.

134 Zawadzki 2013, no. 333 r.11’–12’ [x sal]-ḫu eš-šu a-na GADA.MEŠ AN<sup>e</sup> / [a-n]a <sup>d</sup>UTU. Possibly, the same textile was used also for the baldachin of Aya, see *ibid.*, r.13’–14’.

135 Zawadzki 2013, nos. 321:7; 325:8; 326:9; 329:8.

136 Zawadzki 2006, 135; *id.*, 2010, 412.

137 NBC 8363:4–6. See Beaulieu 2003, 230.

138 NBC 8363:9–11.

but its use is not indicated in the text and the name of the god is not preserved.<sup>139</sup>

Gods could also wear garments usually used by deities of different gender. In addition to the above-mentioned *adīlus* for the garments of Nabû and Nanāya, other interesting examples may be discussed here. For example, Anunītu wears not only items of clothing which are typical of the goddesses' attire, such as the *nahlaptu* and the *lubār erru*, but also male garments. In fact, the Ebabbar texts show that her vestments included the *hullānu*-wrap and the belts of the *nēbehu*- and *patinnu*-type, usually parts of the male gods' attire.<sup>140</sup> The reason for this can be found in the specific personality of the goddess, which made her a manifestation of the warlike aspect of Ištar,<sup>141</sup> the "androgynous" deity. Consequently, Anunītu's male vestments probably became a means to express her warlike characteristics. This interpretation is also confirmed by the lack of the *kusītu*, a common female garment, in her wardrobe.<sup>142</sup> Analogous considerations may be made about the use of the *pašīru* (a loose garment?) by Aya, the spouse of Šamaš;<sup>143</sup> this item of clothing also characterised the Storm-god's attire.<sup>144</sup> Concerning Gula's wardrobe, it also included the *šibtu*, one of the most characteristic male vestments.<sup>145</sup>

Materials used for the divine garments in Assyria and Babylonia were wool and linen. In some cases, the terminology used in the texts is more specific, since it refers to rare materials or to fine varieties of wool and linen used in the production of the sacred vestments. The Akkadian word *kitinnū*, only attested in the 1st millennium BCE, has been interpreted as meaning cotton, although this is far from certain. From the analysis of the Neo-Babylonian attestations, Zawadzki concludes that the term designated

a high quality new material comparable to wool and not a finished linen product.<sup>146</sup> Another possible candidate for cotton is the Neo-Babylonian term *karpassu*,<sup>147</sup> which has been interpreted as a fibre designation of Sanskrit origin (from *karpāsa*, "cotton").<sup>148</sup> Also in Assyria the material called *kitinnū* was used for garments, as witnessed by a text from Sîn-šar-iškun's reign (623?–612 BCE).<sup>149</sup> In addition, in lists of textile products from Nineveh we find the word *biršu*, which qualifies a number of garments. This term, usually referred to as a coarse cloth and tentatively translated as "felt",<sup>150</sup> has also been interpreted as referring to "cotton".<sup>151</sup> The first attestation of the use of cotton in Assyrian written sources is found in royal inscriptions of Sennacherib (705–681 BCE), where the king mentions the trees of exotic origin planted in his royal garden in Nineveh, among which there were also *iššū nāš šīpāti*, "trees bearing wool".<sup>152</sup> The fact that no specific word is used for this fibre indicates that cotton was a recent import in Assyria.<sup>153</sup> It is worth noting that the area of provenance of these trees is identified in this text as Kaldu, namely Babylonia. This is in line with the hypothesis that consumption of cotton in southern Mesopotamia precedes the discovery of this fibre in Assyria. According to Sennacherib's words, the "wool" picked from these trees was woven into clothing (*imḥašu šubātīš*) by the Assyrians.<sup>154</sup> However, cotton was in use for the manufacture of garments for the Assyrian palace elite before the 7th century BCE, as clearly witnessed by traces of cotton fabric among the garment remains in the Assyrian Queens' Tombs of the 8th century BCE at Nimrud.<sup>155</sup>

146 Zawadzki 2006, 25–26.

147 AEAD, 47b.

148 Mayrhofer 1992–2001, 317–318. The Sanskrit origin of the Akkadian word is mentioned in CDA, 149b. The word is also attested in other Semitic languages as well as in Greek and Latin, see Beaulieu 1989, 71–72 for discussion.

149 Falkner 1952–1953, 307, text no. 2:2.

150 Fales and Postgate 1992, 108 and passim. See also CDA, 45b: "felt" and AEAD, 17b: "wool felt, (pressed) felt".

151 AEAD, 17b: "cotton wool".

152 RINAP 3/1, 17 vii 53–57 *tam-šil KUR.ḥa-ma-nim / ša gi-mir ŠIM.ḪI.A GURUN ši-ip-pa-a-te / GiŠ.MES tuk-lat KUR-i ù KUR.kal-di / a-di GiŠ.MES na-aš SÍG.ḪI.A / qé-reb-šú ḥur-ru-šu i-ta-a-šá az-qu-up*, "I planted alongside it (the palace) a botanical garden, a replica of Mount Amanus, which has all kinds of aromatic plants (and) fruit trees, tress that are the mainstay of the mountains and Chaldea, together with trees bearing wool collected inside it". But note that in AEAD, 42b *iššū nāš šīpāti* is erroneously rendered as "silk tree".

153 See Beaulieu 1989, 71 fn. 58.

154 RINAP 3/1, 17 viii 64 *iš-šu na-aš ši-pa-a-ti ib-qu-mu im-ḥa-šu šu-ba-ti-iš*, "They picked trees bearing wool and wove it into clothing."

155 Toray 1996, 199–200 and pls. 2b, 5.

139 SAA 7, 176 r.5'–7' [k]i-ma TÚG.ki-in-da-[ba-si] / [u]s-se-ri-bu x[x] / [UDU].SISKUR ina IGI "d"[x] / [x x x x], "After they had brought the *kinda[basi]*-garments in [the temple(?), an of]fering before the god [... will be performed]."

140 Zawadzki 2006, 196.

141 Zawadzki 2006, 197.

142 Zawadzki 2006, 196.

143 Zawadzki 2013, nos. 179:8'–9'; 181 r.2'. In the text no. 179 this textile occurs between head-dresses and sashes, while in no. 181 after head-dresses. The term *pašīru*, which is not included in the dictionaries, seems to be based on the verb *pašāru*, "to release, free". According to the meaning of the root, the word probably refers to a loose garment or to the loose texture of this garment's cloth.

144 Zawadzki 2013, no. 82 r.22. This item is mentioned in a section dealing with Adad's attire and occurs after sashes and *sūnu*-textiles. This probably means that the *pašīru* was an article of secondary importance in Adad's dress, perhaps an outer garment or an accessory element to be attached to another item of apparel.

145 Zawadzki 2006, 198.

Remains of cotton have also been identified in Uruk and may be dated back to the Neo-Babylonian Period.<sup>156</sup> The Neo-Babylonian texts from the Ebabbar archive show that *kitinnû*,<sup>157</sup> whose occurrences with the determinative SÍG attest that it was categorised as a “wool-like” material (SÍG.*kitinnû*), and was employed for the manufacture of two kinds of divine garments in substitution of wool:<sup>158</sup> *šibtu*<sup>159</sup> and *lubāru*.<sup>160</sup> Concerning the former textile, we may observe that *kitinnû* served to produce both the well-known *šibtu*-garment and the homonymous bed cover; in a number of texts the *šibtu*-garment occurs in association with Anunītu,<sup>161</sup> while the *šibtu*-cover is attested in connection with the bed of two male deities, Adad<sup>162</sup> and Šamaš.<sup>163</sup> As for the *lubāru*, an important component of the wardrobe of Šamaš, we know that this garment was made of *kitinnû*. In other cases, the end product to be manufactured with the *kitinnû*-material is not mentioned and the description in the text is only limited to the thread to be used for the divine costumes; a document informs us that 18 minas of *kitinnû* along with one mina of *hūratu*-dye and one *qū* of alum were assigned to an individual to produce thread for Anunītu's garments (*ana ḫimutu ša Anunītu*).<sup>164</sup>

Another term used in the Akkadian textile terminology of the 1st millennium BCE is *būšu*. This word of Western Semitic origin probably refers to a very fine variety of linen, perhaps fabricated in Egypt and exported in the Levantine coast.<sup>165</sup> It was used both in Assyria and in Babylonia. In

Assyria this commodity was imported from the Levant and Syria, as witnessed by the mention of *byssus* in the tribute from the Land of Suḫi on the Euphrates<sup>166</sup> and the *šaddīnu*-garments of *byssus* occurring in a Sennacherib's letter dealing with valuable commodities received from the Levant.<sup>167</sup> The presence of *šaddīnu* of *byssus* in the palace of the pharaoh Taharqa<sup>168</sup> corroborates the hypothesis of the Egyptian origin of this textile material. In this connection, it is also important to remember that linen from Egypt was imported into Babylonia.<sup>169</sup> As observed above, blue-purple yarn of *byssus* (*būšu ḫimītu*) occurs among the garments of Šamaš in a document dealing with change of vestments in accordance with specific periods of the religious calendar in Sippar.<sup>170</sup> In all probability, yarn of *būšu* served to produce specific items of clothing or small decorative parts of them which are not documented in these texts.

Other textile terms attested in the Neo-Babylonian documentation probably refer to specific kinds of woven cloth. The word *kibsu* is frequently attested in the Ebabbar documents in connection to cult-related textiles. This term is interpreted by scholars as a designation for a type of linen fabric.<sup>171</sup> Given the fact that the verb *kabāsu* means “to tread upon, to put down”, the derived nominal form probably refers to the technical operation of submitting the *kibsu*-thread under the *ḫimu*-thread,<sup>172</sup> resulting in a special pattern in the woven structure. If this interpretation is valid, the name of the fabric probably derived from the position of the *kibsu*-thread in the woven structure. The special pattern was due to the material or colour of the *kibsu*, which probably differed from the *ḫimu*-thread. As we will see below, the *kibsu* was used not only for the production of garments, but also for other textile products aimed at embellishing the temple's structures and furnishings.

### ***Dressing Mischwesen and non-anthropomorphic figures in 1st-millennium BCE Babylonia***

In addition to statues of gods, the divine presence was also made manifest through demons of composite nature, the so-called *Mischwesen* (in German Assyriological literature), and through a number of objects that were used as symbols of certain deities. For their divine nature, the name of these beings was written with the determinative usually used

156 Völling 2008, 209 (Tomb 21594).

157 Texts concerning the use of *kitinnû* in the temple-related textile manufacture in Sippar are published in Zawadzki 2013, 475–490. Zawadzki tentatively translates the term as “cotton”.

158 See, e.g., Zawadzki 2013, no. 582:5, where the amount of *kitinnû* is said to have been assigned to Sūqāya “instead of wool” (*ku-mu SÍG.ḫi.A*).

159 Zawadzki 2013, nos. 556:2–3; 561:1–2; 573:1–3; 575 r.1–3; 576:3–4; 581:1–3; 582:3–4.

160 Zawadzki 2013, nos. 558:2–3; 582:1–2; 583a:1–2.

161 Zawadzki 2013, nos. 575 r.1–3; 576:3–4. Perhaps, the name of the goddess Anunītu is also intended in no. 573:1–3.

162 Zawadzki 2013, no. 581:1–3.

163 Zawadzki 2013, no. 582:3–4.

164 Zawadzki 2013, no. 609:1–3.

165 At present, the evidence about this word is too meagre and problematic to support the interpretation that it refers to sea-silk, namely, the material secreted by the *Pinna nobilis*. For a different opinion, although not confirmed by the extant sources, see Beaulieu 1989, 71, commenting on the possibility that *būšu* is “une soie secrétée par certains mollusques bivalves et avec laquelle on confectionne encore aujourd'hui des tissus”, and Villard 2010, 394, about the identification of *byssus* (*būšu*) with sea-silk and its use in the Assyrian luxury textile manufacture.

166 RIMA 3, 90.

167 SAA 1, 34:11.

168 RINAP 4, 103:21.

169 Zawadzki 2006, 24, citing the text CT 2, 2:8.

170 Zawadzki 2013, no. 175:12–16.

171 CAD K, 339a s.v. *kibsu* B.

172 This hypothesis is suggested by the text TCL 12, 109:4, where a white fabric (*miḫṣu*) is said to be constituted by a twined yarn and *kibsu*-yarn (*ḫimu u kibasu*). See CAD K, 339b s.v.





Figure 14.3. Wall-panel from the North Palace at Niniveh, depicting guardian demons wearing waist belts and knee-length kilts (after Barnett 1976, pl. IV, detail).

for divine names. Also these entities were the recipients of offerings and addressees of prayers and ritual practices in ancient Mesopotamia. Among the benevolent demons whose nature shows features of both humans and animals we find the *urdimmu*. His upper body is that of a man, while his lower body resembles that of a lion. He is usually represented as wearing a horned tiara and carrying a staff characterised on the top by a moon-crescent. As protective creatures, they acted as gate guardians to protect the entrance to temples and palaces. In a Neo-Assyrian text, an *urdimmu* is mentioned among various statues of large size for the *cella* of Marduk in the temple of Nabû in Nimrud.<sup>173</sup> On the reliefs of Rooms I and S of Assurbanipal's North Palace at Nineveh<sup>174</sup> and on seal impressions from the same city,<sup>175</sup> *urdimmus* are represented with a curled tail. According to the texts from the Eanna archive, the articles of clothing destined for the statues representing the *urdimmus* in the Babylonian cult were light-coloured or white waistbands (TÚG.BABBAR.RA.MEŠ), sashes (*hušannu*), KUR.RA-garments, *uzāru*-garments, tassels(?) (*adīlu*), and perhaps also jackets (*širiam*).<sup>176</sup> The identification of the first two articles is facilitated from a comparison with the pictorial evidence of *urdimmus* in Neo-Assyrian iconography; these demons are always represented as naked and wearing only a waist belt.<sup>177</sup> In the above-mentioned North Palace reliefs, the waist belt is characterised by horizontal striations. Perhaps, these lines were of different colours. Instead, given the fact that these monsters are naked in visual art, it is impossible to identify other items of their clothing, although we may suppose that they also wore other types of dress. According to YBC 7436,<sup>178</sup> tassels destined for the *urdimmus* were made of woven cloth of white (*pešû*), red (*tabarru*), and blue-coloured (*takiltu*) wool, as well as of linen. Nothing is known, however, about the materials for the KUR.RA-garments, the *uzāru*-garments, and the jackets, although these too could have been of wool. Tassels were produced for the *uzārus*, as witnessed by PTS 3230:<sup>179</sup> the text mentions one mina and 52 shekels of red- and blue-coloured wool for six tassels and two minas and five shekels of red- and blue-coloured wool for other six tassels. We may suppose that other *urdimmus* also wore knee-length kilts, as the ones illustrated in two panels from the North Palace in Nineveh as vestments of lion-headed

and humanoid guardian demons (Fig. 14.3).<sup>180</sup> Are these kilts with a long fringed band the tasseled *uzāru*-garments that are mentioned in the Neo-Babylonian texts? An idea of the polychrome appearance of the waist belts or sashes worn by the *urdimmus* may be gained from the remains of wall paintings at Til Barsip (modern Tell Ahmar), where some exemplars of sashes belonging to palace attendants are represented.<sup>181</sup> It is also interesting to observe that personnel employed as door keepers at gates of buildings decorated with images of *urdimmus* received the same types of garments usually destined to cover the statues of these benevolent demons with whom they were associated. In fact, from the text YOS 17, 255 we learn that Ištar-rēšū'a, a guardian who stationed before the statue of an *urdimmu*, received one KUR.RA-garment.<sup>182</sup> Membership to this specific professional group was probably stressed through the affiliation to the tutelary demon.

Other items of clothing were allocated for deified objects. These objects were placed in the shrine along with the god's statues and were considered sacred ("divine") for their association with specific deities. Moreover, the presentation of offerings to these objects, a practice usually reserved for the gods, reveals that they were considered as other important media for the divine-human communication. The Divine Staff or Sceptre (*huṭāru*) is one of the non-anthropomorphic figures which are documented in the Eanna temple archive at Uruk. According to the text PTS 3230,<sup>183</sup> this item representing the concept of divine and royal authority was clothed with a garment called *talbuštu*, a nominal formation based on the verb *labāšu*, "to dress". To produce this item of clothing one mina and 52 shekels of woollen woven cloth (*miḥṣu*) were needed. We do not know the exact amount of wool that was necessary to cover the Sceptre, because from the above-mentioned quantity of wool six tassels(?) for the garments of the Divine *urdimmus* were also produced. The Sceptre's "garment" was made of red-coloured wool dyed with *hūratu*, a dyeing substance probably to be identified with madder, and of blue-coloured wool. The text also informs us that the wool amount included both thick (*šapū*) and thin (*ruqqu*) fabric. Evidently, these two types of woven cloth of different consistency served to give a variegated appearance to the cloth surface, with the thin part probably destined for the internal part of the textile and the thick part for the borders. Given the fact that the garment in question served to cover the Sceptre, it probably was a cloth envelope of tubular shape. Alternatively, it was

173 CTN 3, 95 B, 4–8.

174 Barnett 1976, pls. XXVI (Room I, slab I), LIV (Room S, entrance a).

175 Herbordt 1992, 90–91.

176 Cincinnati 20:1–2; YBC 7436:35, 43; PTS 3230:6–7, 17. See Beaulieu 2003, 361–362.

177 Beaulieu 2003, 362.

178 Beaulieu 2003, 361.

179 Beaulieu, 2003, 361.

180 Barnett 1976, pls. IV (Room B), XXI (Room F), XXXI (Room K).

181 Albenda 2005, 66 fig. 25.

182 Beaulieu 2003, 363.

183 Beaulieu 2003, 352–353.



perhaps a small piece of cloth upon which the Sceptre was placed in the sanctuary or a piece of cloth serving as cover.

Other gods' paraphernalia were "clothed" in Babylonian temples. The *urigallu* was a symbol frequently associated with deities, namely Ištar and Ušur-amāssu. It consisted of a staff surmounted by a circle-shaped piece on the top, often including a decorative animal-shaped motif within the circular element. The Babylonians created specific elements of clothing as if these divine objects were anthropomorphic deities. Two texts, YOS 7, 183 and PTS 2282,<sup>184</sup> show that amounts of wool cloth were disbursed to produce turbans for the divine *urigallu* staff. In YOS 7, 183 two different quantities of wool are listed: an amount of two minas of woven cloth of red-coloured wool dyed with *inzaḥurētu*-dye was destined for the production of a turban (*paršīgu*) for the *urigallu* of the Lady-of-Uruk, while an amount of 1 2/3 minas of the same type of wool cloth served to make the turban for the staff of the goddess Ušur-amāssu. The same items of red-coloured wool cloth for the two goddesses are also recorded in PTS 2282. The cloth in question could have consisted of a number of tassels which were tied at the base of the circle-shaped element of the staff.<sup>185</sup> Concerning the colour of these products, we see that red-coloured wool (*tabarru*) was obtained by using the dyeing substances named *hūratu* and *inzaḥurētu*. The dye for the blue-dyed wool (*takiltu*) is not specified, but we may suppose that the *uqnātu*-dye was used.<sup>186</sup> It is also worth noting that *urigallu*s could be covered by other textiles as well. A text dating back to Nabonidus' reign (556–539 BCE) mentions materials assigned to the weaver Šāpik-zēri for the dyeing (*ana šīpi*) of a linen ȚU.PAP, namely two minas of *inzaḥurētu*-dye, one mina of alum, and one mina of wool. This textile product served to cover the *urigallu*-standard of Šarrat Sippar of Anunītu.<sup>187</sup> Probably, the amount of wool served to decorate the linen cloth. The Akkadian reading of the logographic writing ȚU.PAP is not known at present.<sup>188</sup> As for the Assyrian evidence, *tākultu* ritual texts and the so-called *Götteradressbuch* describe the cultic topography of the holy city of Assur, constituted by gods and various deified entities. It is possible that the *simulacra* representing these entities in the Aššur Temple were also covered with textiles like the statues of gods. Among these divinised entities, whose names are usually written with the determinative for

gods, there are, for example, temple doors,<sup>189</sup> ziqurrats<sup>190</sup> and the weapons of the gods.<sup>191</sup>

The custom of clothing items was also extended to royal objects which were donated in temples by kings. This is already attested in the 2nd millennium BCE. Two Middle Assyrian texts from Kār-Tukultī-Ninurta (modern Tulūl Al-‘Aqir) concern the distribution of red wool (*tabarribu*) for various cultic objects, among which there are weapons (GIŠ.TUKUL/*kakku*) of various dead kings (Erīšum, Aššur-nādin-aḥḥē, Šulmānu-ašarēd, and Tukultī-Ninurta).<sup>192</sup> The red wool in question probably served to produce the covering of these royal objects or the cushions on which these items were deposited. Interestingly, we may see that this practice is attested in Neo-Babylonian sanctuaries in connection to divine weapons. A document from the Ebabbar archive shows that the weapon of Šamaš was covered by a KUR.RA-garment, the same textile which also clothed his statue; this textile was produced with 30 shekels of blue-purple wool.<sup>193</sup>

Gods' statues were periodically brought outside their temples in processions. In a Late Babylonian text of the Achaemenid Period, a certain Bunene-šimanni is mentioned as the recipient of ten shekels of blue-purple wool for repairing a chariot (GIŠ.GIGIR/*narkabtu*),<sup>194</sup> presumably to be identified with that used for the procession of the Sun-god, as suggested by Zawadzki.<sup>195</sup> The wool probably served to produce the cloth destined to cover the ceremonial chariot, in order to make it ready for the procession. Analogous chariots or other types of vehicles were used for other gods as well.<sup>196</sup> For instance, Ušur-amāssu had her own wagon

184 Beaulieu 2003, 354.

185 Pongratz-Leisten, quoted in Beaulieu 1998, 26 and id. 2003, 354.

186 See Bongenaar 1997, 309.

187 Zawadzki 2013, no. 536:1–r.7.

188 Zawadzki 2013, 464.

189 Menzel 1981, nos. 54 i 29; 56:4'; 58 i 34; 61 i 21–22.

190 Menzel 1981, nos. 54 ii 23, vii 14'; 58 ii 48.

191 Menzel 1981, nos. 54 vi 14, ix 28'; 55:15'; 64:10.

192 MARV IV, 138:1–2; 140 (fragment of a duplicate text of no. 138).

193 Zawadzki 2013, no. 455:1–3 ½ MA.NA SÍG.ZA.GÍN. KUR.‘RA’ [*a-na*] / TÚG.KUR.RA GIŠ.TUKUL DINGIR TÚG.KUR.RA / šá<sup>4</sup>UTU, “Thirty shekels of blue-purple wool [for] the KUR.RA-garment of the god’s weapon, (namely, for) the KUR.RA-garment of Šamaš”. With the same amount a KUR.RA-garment for the god statue was fabricated. See *ibid.*, lines 3–4.

194 Zawadzki 2013, no. 610 r.9–11.

195 The connection with chariots is not limited to the Sun-god. Note that Bunene, a minor god of the Babylonian pantheon which was worshipped in Sippar and Uruk, was considered the son and charioteer of Šamaš. On the Sungod’s chariot, which was considered a divine entity and, as such, received offerings, see Zawadzki 2006, 175–177. A scene of offering presentation before a chariot is depicted in Neo-Assyrian reliefs from Nineveh, see Layard 1849, 469; id. 1849–1853, II, pl. 24.

196 See, e.g., Zawadzki 2013, no. 611:6–r.7 which mentions barley for fodder for the horses of Bēl.

(*attaru*).<sup>197</sup> This reminds us of the mention of amounts of wool for *nakbušu*-covers for chariots in a Middle Assyrian administrative list from Assur.<sup>198</sup> In all likelihood, also the processional chariot of the god Aššur, which was pulled by white horses, was analogously covered by luxury cloths on the occasion of *akītu*-processions arranged in the city of Assur.

### Textiles for cultic performers

In the cultic ceremonies taking place in the religious cycle of the months Šabātu (January–February) and Addāru (February–March), the Assyrian king acted as the principal ritual performer. According to the Assyrian royal tradition, the king was vice-regent of the god Aššur (*iššak Aššūr*), the real king of the country, and high priest (*sangû rabiū*) of the Temple of Aššur in the city of Assur. As high priest, he was the head of the clergy and had to participate in various cultic rituals taking place at the Aššur Temple as well as in other shrines located in various cities of the imperial territory. According to the texts which describe various stages of the cultic rituals celebrated at the Aššur Temple, on the 18th day of Šabātu and on the 8th day of Addāru the king entered the sanctuary and presented offerings and libations in front of the statues of the gods. At this point of the ritual, the text states that a textile called *sasuppu* was placed on the king's shoulders (*ina muḥḫi naglab šarri*).<sup>199</sup> Possibly, this act of ceremonial dressing of the king enabled him to fulfill his function as *sangû rabiū* of the god Aššur. The mention of this act at the very moment of the presentation of various offerings at the table of the god induces us to interpret it as an act of consecration of the king's person. Concerning the meaning and the ritual function of the *sasuppu*, it is important to note that a *sasuppu* for the shoulders of the king is also mentioned in an above-mentioned contract from Nineveh listing textile products belonging to a god, in all likelihood referring to the wardrobe of the divine

statue.<sup>200</sup> The term *sasuppu*, a loanword from Sumerian *túg.šu.su.ub*, is usually interpreted in the dictionaries as a designation for a sort of towel or napkin.<sup>201</sup> The word also occurs in Aramaic, for example, Jewish Aramaic *šwš(y)p*, “cloak, sheet”, and Syriac *šwšp*, “towel, veil, robe”.<sup>202</sup> An undated inventory text from the archive N1 of Assur lists eight multi-coloured *šusuppus*,<sup>203</sup> presumably to be used at the Aššur Temple. The spelling *šusuppu* is uniquely attested here, while the common Neo-Assyrian form was *sasuppu*.<sup>204</sup> In an administrative text three *sasuppus* with red-coloured front part are listed;<sup>205</sup> this confirms that the sides of this textile have different colours. The cultic destination of this textile product is also confirmed by the presence of this item in two records of offerings and cultic materials for the Aššur Temple.<sup>206</sup> The possibility that this element of clothing was a sort of priestly shawl cannot be ruled out, but another and more plausible possibility is that it served to dry the “hands” of the god's statue after they had been washed. In fact, after the *sasuppu* has been put on the king's shoulders, the monarch offers hand-water to the god Aššur.<sup>207</sup> Since this act appears in strict conjunction with the presentation of water and offerings for the god's meal and reminds us of analogous operations made by Assyrian palace attendants towards the king and his guests at royal meals,<sup>208</sup> it is possible that the role of the monarch in the above-described ritual act was analogous to that of the palace lackeys who were entrusted to give out clean napkins and pour hand-water to the participants to the royal banquets before the meal took place.

After the clothing operation with the *sasuppu*-textile and the presentation of hand-water, purification rituals, libations, and various food offerings are performed before the statues of the gods in the Aššur Temple. The act of approaching

197 Beaulieu 2003, 230.

198 MARV III, 5 r.34'. Interestingly, the Middle Assyrian text also specifies that cloths served to cover a specific part of the chariot called *kišādu* (*ibid.*, line r.35'). For comments to this text see Gaspa 2013, 230–231.

199 Menzel 1981, no. 28:7–10 GIŠ.BANŠUR *i-rak-kás* NINDA.M[*EŠ it-qur-a-ti*] / *ḫi-ḫi*-[*n-ḫi*]-*ni* *bu-de-e* *za*-*amru* *gab-bu ana* x[x x]x[x x] / *tap-ḫa-a-ni* *kir-ra-a-ni* *ḫa-aš*-*ba-a-ti* *ú-mal*-*lu*-[*ú*] / *TÚG.sa-su-up-pu ina* UGU MAŠ.*QA* LUGAL *i-kar*-*ru*-*ru*, “He sets the offering table. He places u[pon it] loaves of brea[d, plates] with *ḫi[nḫi]*nu-seeds, a *budē*-confection, and mixed fruits. They (= the priests) fill up the cauldrons, the collector vessels, and the pots, and place a *sasuppu* on the king's shoulders.” See also *ibid.*, nos. 24 i 16–17; 30:6–7; 31 i 12.

200 SAA 6, 190:1–5.

201 See AHW, 1289a s.v. *šuš/sippum*: “(Lenden-)Tuch”; CAD S, 376a s.v. *šusuppu*: “a towel”; AEAD, 99a s.v. *sasuppu*: “napkin, towel, sheet”.

202 See Kaufman 1974, 104. The scholar states that this is a word of foreign origin, but no connection with Sumerian is given in his study.

203 StAT 3, 1 r.28 8 *TÚG*.*šu-sú-up* GÙN.

204 See AEAD, 99a.

205 SAA 7, 120 ii' 4–6 3 *TÚG.sa-su-pat* / [ ] *bé-te* / ZAG S[A5] KUR, “Three *sasuppu*-textiles, the front-part re[d], of the country”.

206 SAA 7, 174:5'; 177:3.

207 Menzel 1981, nos. 28:11; 30:7; 31 i 13.

208 According to the Ninevite text Müller 1937, 62, ii 16–21, concerning with the organization of royal banquets, palace lackeys were entrusted to give out clean napkins and pour hand-water to the king and other noble diners at the banquet before the meal took place. On this Ancient Near Eastern custom, see also Oates and Oates 2001, 58–59.





Figure 14.4. Wall panel from the North Palace at Niniveh, depicting Assyrian priests with fish-shaped headgear (after Barnett 1976, pl. LXIIe).

the gods required purification of the person acting as cultic performer. This is explicitly stated in a hymn dedicated to Ištar of Nineveh: the king is clothed in a clean garment (*ebbūti labiš*), his robe is magnificent and he enters amid holy and pure offerings.<sup>209</sup> More specific details on the priestly garments of the Assyrian king are not explicitly described in the texts. From royal representations in palace reliefs and other monuments it seems that the king's ritual dress was similar to that used in profane contexts.<sup>210</sup> An

important peculiarity of his dress was represented by its decoration; parts of the garment, such as the breast and the shoulder, could be decorated with images of the sacred tree, the purifying genii, the winged disc, and the royal figure, four iconographical elements aimed at conveying the idea of the proximity of the king to the divine world and the divine-inspired nature of his rule.<sup>211</sup> Nothing is known about the colours of his priestly garments, although we may presume that they also played a role in the liturgy. That the

209 SAA 3, 7:13–14.

210 For the royal garments in ritual scenes, see, e.g., Layard 1849–1853, I, pl. 12 (Assurnāṣirpal II in a relief from

Nimrud); Barnett 1976, pl. LIX (Assurbanipal in a relief from Nineveh).

211 Layard 1849–1853, I, pls. 6, 9.

royal garments played a significant role in Assyrian religious practices is witnessed by the fact that the king's clothes could be used as a substitute of his person; more precisely, the king could participate in the processions of the gods in the form of his garments.<sup>212</sup>

An important article of the priestly dress was the head-dress. From some letters, we learn that Assyrian priests were shaved and wore headgear (*kubšu*),<sup>213</sup> presumably in the shape of a caudal fin, as may be seen from pictorial representations of priests in the Neo-Assyrian Period.<sup>214</sup> A wall-panel from Room S' of the North Palace in Nineveh shows a group of priests, shaved and in their peculiar attire (Fig. 14.4).

This fish-shaped conical head-dress was probably intended to stress the ritual relationship between the Assyrian priests and the fish-skin dressed mythical *apkallus*.<sup>215</sup> This item of clothing for priests was fabricated by a highly specialised textile artisan called *ša-kubšišu* in Neo-Assyrian texts.<sup>216</sup> Apart from priestly garments and other textiles used by Assyrian priests and the king in ordinary temple rituals, there were articles of clothing destined for special ritual occasions and cultic performers. This can be assumed in the light of a Neo-Assyrian relief from Nimrud, where some cultic dancers dressed in lion-cloaks are represented in the act of performing a victory dance.<sup>217</sup> Their robe is constituted by a lion-headed outer garment whose interior border was decorated by tassels and by a short knee-length and short-sleeved tunic with analogous tassels. In Assyria, there were also various figures of devotees and cultic performers associated to the cult of Ištar and enhancing the particular nature of the goddess as a coincidence of opposites, like the effeminate men (*assinnu*), the corybants (*kurgarrû*), and the coiffured men and women (*kazru*, *kazrutu*). Effeminate men and corybants participated in Assyrian victory rituals as performers of songs and dances.<sup>218</sup> Corybants played a central role also in the cult of Nanāya.

In a Neo-Assyrian hymn they are described as armed with spindles and whips and adorned with female jewellery.<sup>219</sup> From a Neo-Assyrian text from the city of Tušhan (modern Ziyaret Tepe) mentioning the acquisition of a "man-woman" by a textile bleacher or washer (LÚ.TÚG.UD = *ašlāku* or *pūšāia*),<sup>220</sup> it seems that the dress of these goddess-linked cultic actors was white. Perhaps, an article of clothing worn by these cultic figures was the *šiprātu*-sash, of which 50 white exemplars are recorded in a document from an archive associated to the cult of Ištar at Nimrud.<sup>221</sup>

### Textiles for the interior of sanctuaries

In a Neo-Assyrian hymn dedicated to the city of Arbela, the holy city of Ištar, the sanctuary of the goddess is described as "adorned with attractiveness".<sup>222</sup> In fact, a number of textile designations occurring in cultic contexts concern textile products which were used to embellish the interior of the Assyrian and Babylonian temples and their furniture. From an administrative document from Nimrud we learn that various types of cloth, including black and red wool cloth, served as blankets or rugs, some of which were used to cover chairs. All these textiles were destined to the temple of Sîn.<sup>223</sup> Other textile products were used in Assyrian and Babylonian temples as gods' paraphernalia. Curtains separated the *cella* from the other rooms of the sanctuary.<sup>224</sup> From a letter of Urdu-Nabû to the Assyrian king, we see that the access to the *cella* and the drawing of the curtain to remove the statue for a festival had to be executed on a certain day: "On the 28th day we will clear the temple, and I will bring in the wooden ladders. On the 29th day we will draw the curtain, take down Ištar's jewellery and [rem]ove Ištar from the lion(-shaped pedestal)."<sup>225</sup> The word used to indicate this curtain in the Assyrian dialect is *mardutu*, which probably refers to the drapes separating the area of the god's statue, i.e., the *cella*, from the rest of the inner space of the temple.<sup>226</sup> According to the interpretation given in the *Chicago Assyrian Dictionary*, the term *mardatu* designated

212 SAA 10, 339:12–13; 340:9–12. For clothes functioning as representatives of members of the royal family in rituals, see the letters SAA 10, 246:8'–12' and 258:2'–3'.

213 See SAA 10, 96 and 97.

214 See Barnett 1976, pl. LXIIe (BM 124923); Luukko and Van Buylaere 2002, 59, fig. 12 (ANE 124948).

215 See Layard 1849–1853, II, pl. 6.

216 See Gaspa 2013, 233 fn. 115 for the attestations of this textile profession.

217 Layard 1849–1853, I, pl. 30. This scene from this relief (BM 124548) is also represented in Livingstone 1989, 80 fig. 27. For a picture of another wall-panel from Nimrud (730–727 BCE) showing a ritual performer wearing a lion-cloak in the British Museum image catalogue (object ref. no. 136773 1976,0201.1) see <http://www.bmimages.com/results.asp?image=00111849001&imagex=186&searchnum=0002>.

218 Menzel 1981, no. 39:9'–11'.

219 SAA 3, 4:10'–16'.

220 Parpola 2008, 45, text no. 6:3–5. See also the text no. 7.

221 Parker 1961, 18, text ND 2086:1 50 TÚG.šip-rat BABBAR. MEŠ. See Parpola 2008, 50.

222 SAA 3, 8 r.21' É.KUR ku-uz-bu 'za'-u-'un' [x x x x x x].

223 Parker 1961, 48, text ND 2758:10' a-na É—<sup>d</sup>30.

224 The use of curtains to separate the most sacred place of the temple is also attested in the Old Testament. According to *Exodus* 26:31–35, a curtain of blue, purple and scarlet yarn and finely twisted linen divided the Holy Place from the Most Holy Place, which contained the ark of the Testimony.

225 SAA 13, 59:6:13.

226 See, e.g., Müller 1937, 14, lines ii 45–46 ina pi-i É—<sup>d</sup>la-bu-ni TÚG.mar-du-tu / ma-[har x x G]IŠ.GU.ZA ša MAN-ut-te



a multi-coloured fabric woven in a special technique, to be used for various textile products, for example curtains.<sup>227</sup> The possibility that the term also refers to a carpet cannot be ruled out, although the word seems to refer more to the appearance (and to the weave?) of the textile than to its use and purpose. In the light of the texts from the city of Mari (modern Tell Hariri), Durand concludes that this textile designation simply referred to a “(tissue) qui descend”,<sup>228</sup> i.e., a sort of wall hanging. Smith, who has recently reviewed the evidence for this term, suggests that the meaning of the root \**mrd* probably refers to the closely-packed weave which served to create unbroken fields of colour in the designs of the textile.<sup>229</sup> What is certain is that *mardatu*-textiles were used to adorn palaces and temples; its use in religious buildings may be seen in the case of the sanctuary of Ištar of Arbela:<sup>230</sup> a Middle Assyrian text from Assur mentions two *mardatus*, probably to be identified with the curtains at the entrance of the *cella*, which needed to be repaired. The 2nd millennium attestations reveal that this multi-coloured textile could be decorated with figural designs: the one described in a Middle Assyrian text from Kār-Tukultī-Ninurta was decorated with figures of people, wild animals or monsters, fortified towns and images of the king.<sup>231</sup> In an administrative document from Nineveh, an amount of linen is recorded: it was destined for the production of curtains(?) for Ištar’s temple, as well as for the production of covers and drapes for beds and chairs.<sup>232</sup> The Neo-Assyrian term for curtain is *maldudu*, a nominal form from the verb *šadādu*,

“to drag”.<sup>233</sup> In the Eanna sanctuary of Uruk, the *cella* of Ištar had a door curtain hanging at the entrance. The amount of linen (GADA) or combed flax (GADA.*ḥalšu*) needed to make this curtain, called *gidlū* in the texts, is given in some documents, and ranges from 35<sup>234</sup> to 12 minas.<sup>235</sup> This curtain was also present in the inner *cellas* of other deities, such as Ušur-amāssu,<sup>236</sup> the Lady-of-Uruk, Nanāya, Gula, and <sup>d</sup>IGI.DU.<sup>237</sup> In the case of the god <sup>d</sup>IGI.DU, the textile hanging at the gate of the *cella* could also be the *šuppu*, a term indicating a “braided curtain”.<sup>238</sup> Two linen *šuppu*s are attested for the entrance of the *cella* of this god.

From other texts we learn that a tent (*zaratu*) was peculiar to Nanāya’s cult. His *cella* hosted a tent with a door curtain at the entrance.<sup>239</sup> This curtain, which could be of wool<sup>240</sup> or combed flax,<sup>241</sup> is also said to lie in front of (*ša pāni*) Nanāya’s statue.<sup>242</sup> The *cella* was also equipped with a dividing curtain (*šiddu*),<sup>243</sup> for the production of which both wool and combed flax were necessary.<sup>244</sup> This means that both the door curtains and the dividing curtains were made of mixed materials; perhaps the coloured wool served for the decoration of some parts of the linen cloth, for example, the border.<sup>245</sup> The *šiddu* was a finely elaborated curtain employed also for the main part of the temple of Šamaš at Sippar. Documents from this archive show that it was very heavy and that it was made of linen.<sup>246</sup> The *gidlū*

*ša-al-’a-at*, “A curtain has [been hung? ...] at the opening of the Bēt Labbunu and the royal throne has been set up.”

227 CAD M/I, 277a s.v. For the interpretation that it designated a rug or tapestry see CDA, 197b and AEAD, 61a.

228 Durand 2009, 64.

229 Smith 2013, 162.

230 MARV III, 8 r.35’–36’ [x +]3’ TÚG.ḪI.A. MEŠ’ ù 2 TÚG.mar-da-a-tú / [x x] ‘a-na e-pa-še, “[...]three textiles and two curtains to be repaired.” Freydank prefers to translate the term with “Teppich”, probably on the authority of von Soden (AHw, 611a: “ein Teppich?”).

231 Köcher 1957–1958, 306–307, lines iii 32–38 1 TÚG.mar-du-tu ša 5 pi-x-[x / ša ši-pár UŠ.BAR bir-mu-šu x[x / ni-še ù ú-ma-ma-ni a-x[x / ša URU.DIDLI du-un-nu [ù] [x / ša-lam LUGAL i-na GIŠ.ma-as-[x / GIŠ.x-a-[ḫun] a-ḫa-x-[x / ša-lam LUGAL i-na x x x, “One *mardatu* with five [...], (the work) of a multi-coloured weaver [...], decorated with figures] of people and beasts [...], of different towns and fortresses, and [...], the image of the king on a wooden [...], [...], the image of the king on a [...].” See also the discussion in Smith 2013, 169, 170.

232 SAA 7, 115 r. ii 3–4 [SÍG.GAD]A a-kil-tú / [(x x) a-n]a mal-di-di šá É—15’, “[Linen fib]re, consumption: [... talents, fo]r the curtains of the shrine of Ištar.” But note that Fales and Postgate translate the term as “veils”.

233 CDA, 193b. Another term for curtain is the Neo-Babylonian *šiddu*, which is based on the same lexical root

234 PTS 2038:1. See Beaulieu 2003, 139.

235 UCP 9/1, 68. See Beaulieu 2003, 139.

236 NBC 8350:4, YBC 3715:10. See Beaulieu 2003, 230, 276.

237 YBC 3715:8–10. See Beaulieu 2003, 275–276.

238 PTS 2491:4. See Beaulieu 2003, 283.

239 YBC 9582:1–3. See Beaulieu 2003, 189–190.

240 YOS 17, 305:8 (red-coloured wool). See Beaulieu 2003, 190.

241 NBC 8350:1 (combed flax). See Beaulieu 2003, 190.

242 NBC 8350:2–3. See Beaulieu 2003, 190.

243 GCCI 2, 381:1. See Beaulieu 2003, 190.

244 GCCI 2, 381:1–2 (blue-coloured wool and flax). See Beaulieu 2003, 190. It seems that no prohibition of manufacturing textiles of mixed fibres existed in Mesopotamia. For the prohibition of mixing wool and linen in the Old Testament, see *Deuteronomy* 22:11 and *Leviticus* 19:19.

245 According to CT 4, 27:14, the *šiddu* was decorated by a woollen braid cord (*nīru*), presumably of a colour different from the one of the curtain. See CAD N/II, 265a s.v. *nīru* B, although the occurrence of *nīru* refers to chests. See also Quillien 2014, 288.

246 Zawadzki 2013, no. 347:7’–8’ ½ GÚ.UN 5 ½ MA.NA SÍG.ta-bar-ri / KI.LAL 2 GADA šid-du.M[EŠ], “Thirty-five and a half minas of red wool, the weight of two linen *šiddu*-curtain[s]”; *ibid.*, 396, no. 414:6’–7’ [PAP x+]5 GÚ.UN 38 ½ MA.NA SÍG.ḪI.A] / [a-na dul-lu šá šid-du

door curtain was an important component also in the Sun-god's *cella* in the main temple of Sippar, where it seems to have been functionally complementary to the *šiddu*-curtain.<sup>247</sup> Curtains adorning the door of his temple were made of linen;<sup>248</sup> periodical repairs of this particular textile are documented in the text CT 55, 858.<sup>249</sup> For the cleaning of both *gidlūs* and *šiddus* launderers received amounts of tamarisk, alkali, and plant oil.<sup>250</sup>

The area of the temple where the god's statue was placed was covered by a sort of tent or baldachin, called *dalat šamē* or simply *šamū* in Neo-Babylonian. A text from the Ebabbar archive specifies that linen was used for the baldachin of the god (GADA.MEŠ AN<sup>o</sup>).<sup>251</sup> In the Eanna temple at Uruk, Nanāya had her own tent (*zaratu*),<sup>252</sup> while in the case of Bēltu-ša-Rēš a canopy, called *šamū*, was in use.<sup>253</sup> Baldachins for divine statues are not documented in Neo-Assyrian texts, but we can suggest that the Assyrian counterpart was the tent called *zarat šamē* (literally "tent of the sky"), an open-air tent which is attested in a Ninevite administrative document along with various textile products.<sup>254</sup> From a document originating from the Ebabbar archive we learn that three minas of wool were necessary for the manufacture of the *uzāru*-cover of a divine canopy (*andullu*),<sup>255</sup> but in the case of Šarrat Sippar's *šamū* the amount of wool could be of six minas.<sup>256</sup> The *uzāru* is also attested for the canopies of other female deities, such as Anunītu<sup>257</sup> and GAŠAN-AN. NA.<sup>258</sup> Instead, the goddess Kurunnītu is associated to a canvas (*paruktu*), whose function was probably analogous to the tents and canopies, that is, to separate the most sacred area from the other parts of the temple. The *paruktu* is also attested in Assyrian temples, where it was called *pariktu*;

this was a curtain that closed the entrance of the *Bēt ēqi*,<sup>259</sup> an important shrine dedicated to Ištar in which royal rituals were performed. According to the Neo-Babylonian text UCP 9/2, 41, for the fabrication of one *paruktu* an amount of one mina of green-coloured(?) wool (*ḥašaštu*) was disbursed.<sup>260</sup> Other textiles served different purposes. In the Ebabbar temple, linen *kibsu*-fabric was destined for the chapel of Marduk.<sup>261</sup> Textiles for covering the cultic seat (*ša muḥḥi šubtu*), in all likelihood mats or carpets, are mentioned in different texts from the Eanna<sup>262</sup> and Ebabbar temple archives.<sup>263</sup> When the word *šubtu* is used, it refers to the altar-base of the god's *cella*. Exceptionally, also the pedestal (GIŠ.GÌR.GUB) of the statue was covered by a cloth. For this purpose, a *tunšu*-cloth was used.<sup>264</sup> This designation of Sumerian origin was used to indicate a cover or drape<sup>265</sup> for the manufacturing of which coloured wool and linen were needed.<sup>266</sup> The cultic seats (*šubtu*) of Marduk<sup>267</sup> and Bēltiya<sup>268</sup> as well as those of Aya<sup>269</sup> and Anunītu<sup>270</sup> in the Ebabbar *cellas* were covered by a textile of *kibsu*-fabric. It is not clear how these textiles for the cultic seats were made. For instance, the *kibsu* for the cultic seat of Aya is defined "open" (BAD/*petū*);<sup>271</sup> perhaps, the *kibsu*-cloth had a central opening corresponding to the area where the statue was placed on the seat.<sup>272</sup> The *kibsu petū* also occurs in association with the gods Bunene and Šarrat Sippar.<sup>273</sup> From another document we see that an amount of three minas of wool was needed for the manufacture and dyeing

šá É.BABBAR.R[A], "[Total: x+]5 talents 38 ½ minas of wo[ol f]or manufacture of the *šiddu*-curtain of the Ebabbar temple".

247 Zawadzki 2006, 63 text BM 84054 r.14 3 GADA *gi-da-li-e* / *šá pa-pa-ḥu šá* "UTU 4 GADA *šid-du*.MEŠ.

248 Zawadzki 2013, no. 345 r.14'.

249 CT 55, 858:8. See Bongenaar 1997, 322.

250 Zawadzki 2006, 63 text BM 84054 r.12–17.

251 Zawadzki 2013, no. 333 r.11'–14'.

252 PTS 3092:8–9; PTS 3243:2–3; YBC 9582:1–4. See Beaulieu 2003, 189–190. Beaulieu also quotes a letter mentioning a linen tent (GADA.*za-ra-tu*) for the god Šamaš, see *ibid.*, 190, fn. 68.

253 NCBT 2338:5. See Beaulieu 2003, 217.

254 SAA 7, 120 ii' 11.

255 Zawadzki 2013, no. 388 r.11–12.

256 Zawadzki 2013, no. 425:1–3. For the *uzāru* of the *andullu* of Šarrat Sippar see also no. 427 e.6'.

257 Zawadzki 2013, nos. 426:1–2; 427 r.9'–10'.

258 Zawadzki 2013, 566, Nrg 19:2.

259 See Menzel 1981, no. 43 i 16' *pa-rik-tu šá pa-an É—'e'—[qi i-par-rik]*, "[The priest] draws the curtain which is before the Bēt É[qu]."

260 UCP 9/2, 41:1–4. See Beaulieu 2003, 322.

261 Zawadzki 2013, nos. 325 r.21; 326 r.25.

262 Beaulieu 2003, 6.

263 Zawadzki 2013, no. 181:9.

264 Zawadzki 2013, no. 15:4–5, 8–9.

265 See CAD T, 473b s.v.

266 Zawadzki 2013, nos. 13:1–7; 14:1–e.6.

267 Zawadzki 2013, nos. 314 r.16'; 316 r.5'–6'; 324 r.20; 329:12–13; 336 r.3'.

268 Zawadzki 2013, nos. 314 r.16'; 316 r.5'–6'; 329:12–13.

269 Zawadzki 2013, nos. 321:6; 325:7.

270 Zawadzki 2013, nos. 325:18; 326 r.22.

271 Zawadzki 2013, nos. 321:6; 325:7; 326:8.

272 The qualification *petū* is obscure, since it appears in connection with other textiles as well. See Beaulieu 1989, 73 for the tentative hypothesis that the word referred to textiles "que l'on déployait dans le temple, soit sur les murs, soit suspendues à des traverses".

273 Zawadzki 2013, nos. 325:16; 326 r.19 (Bunene); 325:17 (Šarrat Sippar). Perhaps, another *kibsu petū* for Šarrat Sippar is intended in *ibid.*, no. 328:16.



of throne cloths of unspecified gods.<sup>274</sup> In other cases, linen tunics (*salḫu*) are connected with cultic seats of deities,<sup>275</sup> but it is possible that the cloth used for these tunics was also employed for the production of covers for the gods' seats. An analogous case is given by a text from Uruk, concerning the canopy of Bēltu-ša-Rēš, for which two *salḫu*-cloths were used.<sup>276</sup>

Inside the *cella*, which constituted the most holy place of the temple, not all the gods were represented as statues in standing position. In some Assyrian monuments and palace reliefs divine statues are represented as seated on chairs or thrones. In the "White Obelisk", for instance, Ištar's statue, clothed in a long robe and wearing a tiara, is represented as seated on a chair in front of the Assyrian king within her sanctuary.<sup>277</sup> In a relief decorating Wall R of the South West Palace at Nineveh, goddesses' statues are depicted as seated on thrones during a procession along with standing statues of gods (Fig. 14.2). Analogously, Ištar is portrayed as seated on a highly decorated throne on a lion among the "Great Gods" of Assyria in the Malai rock relief.<sup>278</sup> The chair or throne of the gods was considered as a divine being itself as can be seen in the case of the Sungod's GU.ZA in a text enumerating offerings for gods.<sup>279</sup> Consequently, it received offerings and its "dressing" was an integral part of the cultic service towards Šamaš. Documentary evidence from the Ebabbar archive shows that linen was used for the chair of Aya.<sup>280</sup> The god's chair (or throne) in the *cella* was covered by *kibsu*-fabric.<sup>281</sup> Also in Assyria linen cloth was used to cover chairs as well as beds.<sup>282</sup> A Neo-Assyrian textile product used as a cover for chairs was the *šipirtu*. In an administrative text, red-coloured *šipirtu*-textiles for a chair are listed.<sup>283</sup> Perhaps this word designated the cushion or small rug of the chair or, alternatively, the drape used to cover its back.<sup>284</sup> Also the Ziqqurra, the characteristic temple tower of the Mesopotamian urban landscape, occurs as one of the recipients of textiles in the texts from the

Ebabbar archive; in these texts it is mentioned as a deified entity (written with the divine determinative as <sup>d</sup>Ziqqurra). Important details on the textiles destined to adorn this sacred building or a model of it may be found in the so-called *tabû*-lists. The base of the Ziqqurra was covered by a *kibsu*.<sup>285</sup> From other occurrences it seems that the *kibsu* for the *ziqquratu* was of linen.<sup>286</sup> Another text specifies that the *kibsu* was destined for the chapel of the Ziqqurra (*bīt ziqqurra*).<sup>287</sup> Various textiles served to embellish the temple furniture. From the Ebabbar archive we learn that the golden offering table of Šamaš was covered by a linen *kibsu*.<sup>288</sup> Presumably, this tablecloth covered the offering table during the daily presentation of foods and drinks to the god by the priest. A representation of an offering table may be seen in a stone relief which decorated the Room S' of the North Palace of Assurbanipal in Nineveh.<sup>289</sup> In the scene, a small tablecloth is clearly visible on this table along with a number of flat bread pieces and a bowl containing meat cuts.

Assyrian and Babylonian temples also included the gods' bedroom, which played a significant role in sacred marriage celebrations.<sup>290</sup> Above all, the temple was the house of the god (*bīt ili*) and, as such, it was conceived as the place where the deity lived. This idea is clearly expressed in the *Enūma eliš*. After the creation of Babylon by Marduk, the Anunnaki ask the god to build a sanctuary as the place for their rest; to this aim, the temple structure should include a bedroom.<sup>291</sup> In Assyrian the bedroom was called *bēt erši* or *bēt maiāli*. This room is an integral part of shrines documented in Neo-Assyrian texts as places where goddess-related royal rituals were periodically performed, such as in the case of Šarrat šadē<sup>292</sup> and Ištar;<sup>293</sup> offerings were performed before the gods' statues and the divine bed. The significance of the bed and the bedroom in rituals for the goddess is also witnessed by the Assyrian designation of

274 Zawadzki 2013, no. 545 r.2–3.

275 Zawadzki 2013, no. 329:4, 6.

276 NCBT 2338:4–6. See Beaulieu 2003, 217.

277 Seidl 2003–2005, 103b.

278 Thureau-Dangin 1924, 187. In a hymn to the city of Arbela, the goddess is described as seated on a lion (SAA 3, 8 r.5').

279 Zawadzki 206, 184.

280 Zawadzki 2013, no. 324 r.26.

281 Zawadzki 2013, no. 365:6–7.

282 SAA 7, 115 r. ii 5.

283 SAA 7, 120 ii' 12–14.

284 Examples of royal thrones adorned with drapes and rugs are attested in the wall paintings in the Assyrian palace at Til Barsip, for which see Albenda 2005, 63 fig. 23, and on palace reliefs from Nineveh, see Layard 1849–1853, I, pls. 59, 63, 77.

285 Zawadzki 2013, no. 314 r.17' [1 *kib-su* SUMUN] *a-na šu-bat šā* 'ziq-qu[r-rat]. See also *ibid.*, nos. 316 r.7'; 320 r.6'; 324 r.22; 325 e.20; 326 r.24; 329:14; 335 r.15'.

286 Zawadzki 2013, no. 328:13.

287 Zawadzki 2013, no. 336 r.4'.

288 Zawadzki 2013, no. 324 r.23.

289 Barnett 1976, pl. LIX (Relief D of Room S').

290 But the presence of beds for divine couples also characterizes temple complexes outside the Mesopotamian cultural area. In Sargon's Eighth Campaign Account, "a bed of ivory(?) and silver, the god's place of repose, inlaid with gems and gold", is mentioned among various paraphernalia belonging to the Urartian gods Haldi and Bagbartu, which were taken by the Assyrian soldiers from the temple of Mušāšir. See Foster 2005, 810.

291 Pettinato 2005, 139, lines VI, 51–54.

292 Menzel 1981, no. 46:2–3.

293 van Driel 1969, 194, A 127:3–5.

Ištar as “Ištar of the Bedroom” (*Ištar ša bēt maiāli*).<sup>294</sup> The donation of beds to deities is a royal custom attested in the Middle and Neo-Assyrian period. Assurnāširpal I states to have donated a bed to the goddess Ištar, while Sennacherib did the same to Aššur and Assurbanipal to Marduk.<sup>295</sup> That the god’s bed itself was considered as having a divine nature is evident from the letter sent to Sargon II by Ṭāb-šār-Aššur, the state treasurer, who informs the king about the execution of sheep offerings in front of a bed of a god.<sup>296</sup> Celebration of the sacred marriage for Nabû and Tašmētu are attested in Assyria. Neo-Assyrian letters from the royal correspondence shed light on divine beds and on those cultic events. From the letter of Nergal-šarrāni, for example, we learn that on the occasion of this celebration at the temple in Kalḫu, the statue of the god and that of his consort, Tašmētu, were taken to the bedroom (*bēt erši*) of the temple on the 4th day of the month of Ayyāru (April–May), and that the gods stayed there from the 5th to the 10th day.<sup>297</sup> This piece of information may be completed by another letter, sent by Nabû-šumu-iddina, who states that on the 3rd day of Ayyāru the bed would have been set up, in order to enable the god’s statue to enter the bedroom. According to the texts, the wedding night (*quršu*) was the 4th day of the month.<sup>298</sup> The involvement of the bedroom and the bed in such ceremonies also emerges from a letter concerning the sacred marriage of the Lord-of-Lands.<sup>299</sup> The significance of the preparation of the bed for the gods is witnessed by a letter sent to the king, in which Rāšil informs the monarch about the drawing of a sketch of the bed of the Lord of Heaven and Earth.<sup>300</sup> From another letter, unfortunately in fragmentary condition, work on cultic objects is described. The god’s bed is one of these cultic furnishings: the bed’s wooden frame is described as inlaid with silver.<sup>301</sup> An inventory text from Nineveh shows different pieces of divine bedlinen: the components of Šērū’a’s bed, for example, were composed by the following five textiles: *dappastu*, *qirmu*, *gulēnu*, *qarrāru*, and *SI.LUH*.<sup>302</sup> In Neo-Babylonian

texts from the Ebabbar temple archive we see that linen *ḫullānus* were produced for the bed of Šamaš.<sup>303</sup> This is another case in which the name of a garment is also used for textiles of different use.<sup>304</sup> Another textile for the bed of this deity was the *šibtu*,<sup>305</sup> which we have already described above as one of the Sun-god costumes. In this case, it is clear that it refers to a sort of cover or blanket; according to a document from Neriglissar’s reign (559–556 BCE), the weight of this *šibtu* was five minas and 50 shekels,<sup>306</sup> but it could be even heavier, as an amount of 15 minas of wool, registered in a text of the Achaemenid Period from the same archive, demonstrates.<sup>307</sup> The bed of the god of justice was also covered by a *tunšu*-cloth,<sup>308</sup> a textile also used for pedestals. The exact definition of the various elements covering the divine bed in the temple bedroom still escapes us. Concerning the Assyrian evidence, the translations of the terms regarding Šērū’a’s bed which are given in the *Chicago Assyrian Dictionary* seem too generic (i.e., *dappastu*, “a cover or garment”, *qirmu*, “a garment”, *gulēnu*, “a coat”, *qarrāru*, “a textile”).<sup>309</sup> Given the context in which they occur, we may suggest meanings that are more strictly related to bed, bedding, and nightclothes. Accordingly, *dappastu* could be intended as a bedcover or blanket,<sup>310</sup> *qirmu* a blanket,<sup>311</sup> *gulēnu* a nightdress(?),<sup>312</sup>

294 Menzel 1981, no. 64:87.

295 Porter 2006, 314–315. See Foster 2005, 329.

296 SAA 1, 55:13’–r.1.

297 SAA 13, 70:6–8, 13–15. This cultic event is mentioned in lyric terms in an Assurbanipal’s hymn to Nabû and Tašmētu, SAA 3, 6:9–11 TA\* *qi-rib mu-um-me ina È-ša ana a-na-bi-a-[ni 0’]* / DUMU aEN TA\* É—*tup-pi a-na ḫa-am-mu-[ti 0]* / *re-ši-šu ki-i ú-ša-q-qu-u ú-ma-an-n[a x x]*, “When she emerges from the holy workshop to [our] Nabû, the son of Bēl raises his head from the tablet house to the nuptial bedro[om]”.

298 SAA 13, 78:7–10.

299 SAA 13, 200. On bedrooms, see also SAA 13, 204.

300 SAA 13, 175:6.

301 SAA 13, 188:21–22.

302 SAA 7, 117 r.3–6.

303 Nbn 660:4. See Bongenaar 1997, 325.

304 Another indication that textiles were recycled, sometimes with different function. This was probably due to the high value of the textiles involved. See Quillien 2014, 288 about recycling of linen textiles.

305 Zawadzki 2013, nos. 405:1–3 5 5/6 MA.NA 5 GÍN / KI.LAL 1-en TÚG.šib-tu<sub>4</sub> / a-na GIŠ.NÁ šá UTU, “Five minas 5/6 shekels, the weight of one *šibtu* for the bed of Šamaš”; *ibid.*, no. 406:1–3 15 MA.NA SÍG.ḪI.A / ina SÍG.ḪI.A šá šib-tu<sub>4</sub> šá / GIŠ.NÁ šá UTU, “Fifteen minas of wool from the wool for the *šibtu* of the bed of Šamaš”.

306 Zawadzki 2013, no. 405:1–2.

307 Zawadzki 2013, no. 406:1.

308 Zawadzki 2013, no. 13:2–3 TÚG.tu-un-šú šá UGU GIŠ.NÁ / šá UTU. See also *ibid.*, no. 14:2–3.

309 CAD D, 104b; Q, 127a, 268b; G, 127a.

310 AEAD, 21a.

311 In AEAD, 88b the Assyrian term is translated as “mantle, overcoat, wrap”, but another translation may be suggested in the light of the West Semitic attestations of this word. In Jewish Babylonian Aramaic *qrm/qrm’* means “covering”. In Syriac it has the meaning of “felt, felt-like material”. See *Targum Proverbs* 7:16: “I layed out my sleeping mat on a bed and covered it with Egyptian felt.” See LS, 696b; Sokoloff 2009, 1412a; DJBA, 1043b.

312 The translation of “tunic”, given in AEAD, 31b, is too generic.

*qarrāru* a bedspread,<sup>313</sup> and SI.LUH, possibly, a pillow(?).<sup>314</sup> These meanings also accord with the semantic field of the word *ḥullānu*, which designates a blanket or wrap.<sup>315</sup>

In addition to garments, a number of textiles produced by the temple-related artisans for the divine statues were destined to wrap objects with which the dressed statues were equipped. There are some texts from the Ebabbar archive that mention wool for the *pišannu*: this container, possibly a chest or basket,<sup>316</sup> was associated to the statues of two female deities, namely Šarrat Sippar<sup>317</sup> and Anunītu.<sup>318</sup> The function and significance of this item is not clear. In the Eanna texts we may observe that Ušur-amāssu was equipped with a ceremonial wooden *pišannu*.<sup>319</sup> Since this item was a wooden chest or basket, it is possible that it was covered, completely or only in its interior, with a cloth of coloured linen or wool for ceremonial purposes. This interpretation could explain why in a text the term *pišannu* is qualified as a linen object.<sup>320</sup> Texts from the Ebabbar archive show that blue-purple,<sup>321</sup> as well as combinations of blue and red wool<sup>322</sup> or blue-purple and red wool,<sup>323</sup> were used in connection to this object.

Other manufactured textiles were used by the priests in the Ištar temple cult in Uruk. Linen (or cotton?) towels in connection with both the Lady-of-Uruk and Nanāya occur in association with a water-basin in the letter YOS 3, 194.<sup>324</sup>

The washing of the god's hands was an integral part of the cultic rituals in the temple. In the case of the cult of Ušur-amāssu, the cloth for the water-basin is called *sūnu*.<sup>325</sup> This means that the word *sūnu*, usually interpreted as meaning "loincloth", could also designate a towel.<sup>326</sup> This is confirmed by an attestation of the term in an Ebabbar text of the 18th regnal year of Darius; the text mentions two minas of wool assigned to Ardīya, a weaver of multi-coloured fabrics, for the production of *sūnus* for the "hand-water" (*sūnu ša mē qāti*), used to wash the hands of Šarrat Sippar.<sup>327</sup>

Textiles also played a significant role in the religious practices in the form of ritual materials. Some cultic rituals taking place in Assur are very informative about this particular purpose. In the Middle Assyrian text describing the coronation ritual, a passage mentions priests who bring two *biršu*-textiles; one is hung before one deity, presumably Aššur, and other one before a second deity, maybe to be identified with her spouse Mullissu.<sup>328</sup> From this passage it seems that the *biršus*, translated by Müller as *Filzdecken* and in the *Chicago Assyrian Dictionary* as "blankets",<sup>329</sup> were drapes which could be hung, like curtains, but from another passage in the text we see that this textile served to do something, perhaps to present the crown to the new king.<sup>330</sup> Pieces of fabric as well as tufts of textile material and coloured threads were also used in royal rituals. A few examples from Neo-Assyrian cultic texts may be considered here. In a victory ritual involving the king and Ištar-related devotees there is a description of a ritual battle; after the king put the bow on the ground the devotees take an arrow from the chariot of Mašmaš and wrap its point with a piece of fabric, probably of wool.<sup>331</sup> Furthermore, textile materials were allocated for different temple rituals. In a fragmentary text concerning a ritual for Ištar and some operations to be performed before the divine bed, a tuft

313 AEAD, 87b: "bedcover, bedspread, counterpane".

314 The term is only attested in the logographic form. For the interpretation that it was a pillow see Fales and Postgate 1992, xxix and Gaspa 2013, 244.

315 CAD H, 229a: "a blanket or wrap of linen or wool".

316 See CAD P, 420b s.v. *pisannu* A and CDA, 276a s.v. *pišannu* I. However, Zawadzki translates the term as "bag". See Zawadzki 2013, 421 and *passim*.

317 Zawadzki 2013, nos. 456:1–2; 471:1–3. For the *pišannu* see also *ibid.*, texts nos. 463:2; 473:1–4; 489:4–5; 490:5–6; 535:5; 544:5, r.11.

318 Zawadzki 2013, no. 471:1–3.

319 FLP 1564:1. See Beaulieu 2003, 230.

320 Zawadzki 2013, no. 535:5 GADA.*pi-ša-an-ni*.

321 Zawadzki 2013, no. 490:5 10 'GÍN' SÍG.ZA.GÍN.KUR.RA *a-na ṭi'-mu / šá pi-ša-an-ni*, "Ten shekels of blue-purple wool for the yarn for the *pišannu*." For dyeing the yarn (SÍG.*ṭi-me*) used to produce the textile for the *pišannu*, *inzaḥurētu*-dye and alum were used. See *ibid.*, no. 544:7–r.11. On the use of blue-purple wool for this object see also nos. 456:1–2, 463:1–2, and 471:1–2. The text no. 471 specifies that the dyed wool is allocated for the production (*a-na dul-lu*) of this sacred object.

322 Zawadzki 2013, no. 473:1–4.

323 Zawadzki 2013, no. 489:3–4. Note that in this text five shekels of blue-purple wool and ten shekels of red wool are assigned to an individual for repair (*a-na bat-qa*) of *pišannu*(s).

324 YOS 3, 194:16–17. See Beaulieu 2003, 140.

325 NBC 4597:23'. See Beaulieu 2003, 230.

326 Beaulieu 2003, 230.

327 Zawadzki 2013, no. 402:1–3 2 M[A.N]A SÍG.ḪI.A [*a*]-na / TÚG.ÚR *šá me-e-SU.2 / 'šá' dGASAN—UD.KIB.NUN.KI*.

328 Müller 1937, 12, lines ii 17–19 2 TÚG.*bir-še* [x x x x x] x x *i-na-ši-ú-ni* 1 TÚG.*bir-še* / [L]Ú.SA[NGA *aš-šur ul-l*]*a-al* 1 TÚG.*bir-ša* / [*i-na pa-an dNIN.LÍL* x x x] LÚ.SANGA TÚG. [*bir-š*]*a*, "They bring two *biršu*-textiles [...], and the pri[est ha]ngs one [before Aššur], the other [before Mullissu]. The priests [...] the [*birš*]*u*-textile."

329 Müller 1937, 12; CAD B, 261a s.v. *biršu* 2b.

330 Müller 1937, 12, lines ii 24–26 [x x x x] BUR K[*l'* x x x x x x x x x *ku-lu-li*] / *i-na* UGU TÚG.*bir-še ša ina* IGI *aš-šur* [*e-li-lu-ni i-na-ši-a*] / *ú-kal-lal-šu*, "[...] he (= the priest?) brings the crown] on the *biršu*-textile that [was hung] in front of Aššur and crowns him."

331 Menzel 1981, no. 39:25–27 GIŠ.*šil-ta-ḥu* TA\* UGU GIŠ. GIGIR *šá dMAŠ.MAŠ / i-na-aš-šú-u-n*[i] / [SÍG].MEŠ EME-šú *i-lab-bu-ni*.

of wool (*nipšu*) occurs as one of the ritual materials to be used by the cultic performer.<sup>332</sup> It is not clear from the text what was wrapped in the tuft of wool; in all likelihood, the wrapped substance was one of the meat cuts offered before the goddess mentioned in the same passage.<sup>333</sup> A tuft of red wool (*tabrību*) occurs in the *nāṭu*-ritual for the Lady-of-the-Mountain as the ritual materials to be used in a tent on a river bank.<sup>334</sup> The tuft of *tabrību* is also mentioned in other rituals.<sup>335</sup> Multi-coloured wool (*barruntu*) was also used in such ritual operations.<sup>336</sup> From a ritual for the banquet of Gula, the goddess of healing, it seems that a tuft of wool was thrown by the performer in the fire.<sup>337</sup> Threads of multi-coloured wool (*tabrīmu*) were bound around the necks of jars which were placed on the bed of the goddess inside a tent (*maškunu*) on a river bank in the ritual for the Daughter-of-River.<sup>338</sup> The same ritual required the binding of a virgin ewe at the head of the bed with a multi-coloured cloth (*tabrīmu*), the dressing of it in a wrap (*naḥlaptu*) of white wool, and the girding of it with UŠ.BARAG-textiles.<sup>339</sup> The use of coloured cloths and fibres in connection with sacrificial animals was an important element of various rituals throughout the Ancient Near East, as documented, for example, by the donation of reddish-brown NI.NI-textile for a sacrificial bull in Ebla (modern Tell Mardikh)<sup>340</sup> and by the use of white wool, goat's hair, and linen cloths in the sacrifice of a bull for the kettledrum ritual in Hellenistic Uruk.<sup>341</sup> The text dealing with the ritual for the Daughter-of-River also includes a description of the ritual arrangement to be executed before Šamaš: the operations comprise the seating of the Seven Divine Judges on a cloth of linen and the fastening a multi-coloured cloth (*tabrīmu*) on their heads.<sup>342</sup> At the end of the ritual, a clean garment is donated by the devotee to the Seven Divine Judges.<sup>343</sup>

332 van Driel 1969, 194, A 127:19' [x x x x x x x]x *ni-ip-ši i-kar-ri-ik ina* UGU GIŠ.x, "He (= the cultic performer) wraps [... in] a tuft of wool [and places it] on the woo[den offering table?]"

333 The head, the shoulder, the feet, and the fetlocks of the sacrificial sheep are mentioned in van Driel 1969, 194, A 127:17', 18', 20', 21'.

334 BBR 67:4. For rituals on river banks in the Neo-Assyrian period, see the letters SAA 16, 161 and 162.

335 BA 5, 42:5; BBR 66:4; Menzel 1981, no. 51:20'.

336 BBR 66:10, 11.

337 Menzel 1981, no. 49B:3'-4'.

338 KAR 141:12; Ebeling 1931, 88.

339 KAR 141:16-18; Ebeling 1931, 88.

340 Biga 2010, 160.

341 Linssen 2004, 252-253, text TU 44 i 22-23, ii 1.

342 KAR 141:20-22; Ebeling 1931, 88.

343 KAR 141 r.20; Ebeling 1931, 90.

It is possible that all the textiles (*i.e.*, costumes for statues and other cult images, textiles for furnishings and paraphernalia, and textile materials for ritual operations) which were produced for the needs of the Assyrian and Babylonian temples were strictly subject to temple regulations as regards their use. This is another important aspect which is not documented in the written sources, although this may be supposed in light of regulations concerning the activity of the temple personnel in Assyria. We know, for example, that the duties of the priests of the Aššur Temple included looking after the God's furniture and paraphernalia stored in the temple. In a text detailing all these duties, the responsibility over the god's couch and other furnishings is assigned to a person, maybe a priest, associated to the cult of Šîn.<sup>344</sup> The temple steward (*laḥḥinu*) had the responsibility to open the golden locks and the wooden pegs of the temple's doors, to look after the garments (*lubussu*) and jewellery of all the statues of the gods, to give out wooden implements and arrows, and to guard all the utensils of the sanctuary.<sup>345</sup> Presumably, the *laḥḥinu* was in charge of storing the divine vestments in the sanctuary's storeroom and of providing the gods' new clothes to the priests for the dressing ceremony. Some of the garments listed in connection to a *laḥḥinu* in the aforementioned list from Assur<sup>346</sup> probably constituted the *lubussu* of the gods' statues in the Aššur Temple.

### Final remarks: Dressing the sacred in ancient Mesopotamia

This study on the cultic use of textiles in Assyrian and Babylonian temples has analysed the items of clothing that characterised the wardrobes of divine statues and of deified objects in 1st millennium BCE as well as the main uses of textiles for the adornment of the shrines' interior. In some cases, comparative evidence of Neo-Assyrian texts and iconographical materials enables scholars to shed light on given textile products and to tentatively suggest some identifications of the divine garments attested in the written sources. The study of the gods' garments also raises the question of how these garments were fastened to the statues. Fibulas and pins were presumably used to fasten various items of clothing to sculptures in the round. Symbols of gods and cultic objects were probably just wrapped, although we know that peculiar textile products

344 Menzel 1981, no. 22 i 19-22.

345 Menzel 1981, no. 22 ii 8-13 MUD.MEŠ KUG.GI GIŠ. GAG.MEŠ GIŠ.IG.MEŠ *pa-tu-ú* / TÚG.lu-bu-su šu-kut-tu šá DINGIR.MEŠ *gab-bu* / a-ma-ru mu-dam-me-qa-a-ti / GIŠ.šil-ta-ḥi SUM-nu / a-nu-ut É *gab-bu na-ša-ru* / LÚ.lāḥ-ḥi-nu pu-tu-ḥu na-ši.

346 StAT 3, 1.



were also specifically produced for such objects. One can suppose that the dressing operation itself was not limited to covering the statue. Every component of the god's attire should be adapted and properly fixed to the body of the statue. This certainly involved the participation of textile artisans and their assistants under the supervision of one or more priests,<sup>347</sup> in a way not so different from the group of specialised weavers and tailors who fabricated and clothed statues of the Virgin Mary and Saints in some Italian towns until recent times. In all likelihood, clothing statues sculpted in the round in a standing position facilitated the work of the textile specialists, while one wonders how this operation was performed on statues in seated position or in case of sculptures in which the god's statue and the chair formed a unique element. It is also reasonable to surmise that technical characteristics of the sculptures were conceived to facilitate the attachment of items of clothing. For example, one wonders whether the very slim waist and broad hips of the well-known attendant statue of Nabû at Nimrud<sup>348</sup> were conceived to facilitate the attachment of a belt and a garment on the statue's body.

Textiles covering these divine images were far from being simple accessories or *simulacra*. On the contrary, they were used to enhance the divine nature of gods and to communicate specific theological messages to the believers. Colour, shape, and decoration of garments, as well as of covers, carpets, and drapes adorning the temple, constituted other important media to convey the peculiarities of a given god and his or her theology. It is also possible that the relationship between deities and their temples was stressed through the use of the same colour(s) for the divine garments and for the textiles adorning the temple and its furniture. This aspect is especially evident in the case of objects belonging to the god, as we have observed in the case of the blue-purple coloured KUR.RA-textile for both the Sun-god's robe and the cover of his weapon. In addition, certain textiles, like drapes and curtains, played a central role in delimiting the most sacred area of the sanctuary, enhancing the mysterious nature of the divine power and generating the "fear of the gods".<sup>349</sup>

The analysis of the use of textiles in the Assyrian and Babylonian temples opens new research paths towards the understanding of other textiles occurring in the Mesopotamian divine-human interaction. Not all textile materials and end products which were destined for temple

consumption were of high quality or the articles of clothing used by the Assyrian and Babylonian social elites. We have observed that ritual materials could consist in pieces of fabric and threads. In the field of common ritual operations performed by priests, kings, and private devotees, ordinary textile items were probably also used. It is reasonable to think that the use of ordinary textile materials was widespread in the family and popular religion, although it cannot be proven in the light of the present evidence. The custom of wrapping figurines in cloth and bury them in the foundations of sacred buildings<sup>350</sup> is, perhaps, an example of how widespread the idea of "sacred-dressing" was in the religious thought and practice of the Mesopotamians. This custom is currently documented only for royal practices, but, in all probability, it must have been a peculiarity of worship in lower social strata of Mesopotamian population as well. Finally, the considerations about dressing practices in 1st-millennium contexts lead us to investigate the application of the "sacred-dressing" custom also in profane representations, for example of the king, in contexts in which these images played a role in the god-human communication.

### Abbreviations

|       |                                                                                                                                   |
|-------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| AEAD  | Parpola, S. and R.M. Whiting 2007 <i>Assyrian-English-Assyrian Dictionary</i> .                                                   |
| AHw   | von Soden, W. 1958–81 <i>Akkadisches Handwörterbuch</i> , I–III.                                                                  |
| BA    | <i>Beiträge zur Assyriologie und semitischen Sprachwissenschaft</i> , I–X, 1890–1927.                                             |
| BBR   | Zimmern, H. 1896–1901 <i>Beiträge zur Kenntnis der babylonischen Religion</i> , I–II. Assyriologische Bibliothek 12.              |
| CAD   | <i>The Assyrian Dictionary of the Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago</i> , 1956–2010.                                |
| CDA   | Black, J. 2000 <i>A Concise Dictionary of Akkadian</i> . SANTAG. Arbeiten und Untersuchungen zur Keilschriftkunde 5, 2nd edition. |
| CTN 3 | Dalley, S. and Postgate, J.N. 1984 <i>The Tablets from Fort Shalmaneser III</i> . Cuneiform Texts from Nimrud 3.                  |
| DJBA  | Sokoloff, M. 2002 <i>A Dictionary of Jewish Babylonian Aramaic</i> . Dictionaries of Talmud, Midrash and Targum 3.                |

347 See Rāšil's letter asking the king to send him two clergymen as helpers for the clothing ceremony. See SAA 13, 176:12–r.7.

348 The statue is kept at the British Museum (WA 118888). For an illustration, see Cole and Machinist 1998, 65 fig. 14.

349 On the fearsomeness clothing the divine persona, called in Akkadian *puluḫtu*, see the attestations quoted in CAD P, 506b–507a s.v. *puluḫtu* 1a.

350 For remains of possible linen fabric covering a figurine of King Šulgi from an Ur III foundation deposit in the Inanna Temple at Nippur (OIM A31017), see Garcia-Ventura 2008, 249 fig. 1. Mineralized traces of a cloth, possibly of linen, have also been found on a foundation peg figurine of the god Ningirsu from Lagash (AO 76), dedicated by Gudea around 2100 BCE. See Thomas 2012, 149–157.

- KAR Ebeling, E. 1919/22 *Keilschrifttexte aus Assur religiösen Inhalts*, I–II. Wissenschaftliche Veröffentlichungen der Deutschen Orient-Gesellschaft 28/34.
- LS Brockelmann, K. 1928 *Lexicon syriacum*.
- MARV III Freydank, H. 1994 *Mittelassyrische Rechtsurkunden und Verwaltungstexte*, III. Wissenschaftliche Veröffentlichungen der Deutschen Orient-Gesellschaft 92.
- MARV IV Freydank, H. and Fischer, C. 2001 *Mittelassyrische Rechtsurkunden und Verwaltungstexte* IV: Tafeln aus Kār-Tukultī-Ninurta. Wissenschaftliche Veröffentlichungen der Deutschen Orient-Gesellschaft 99.
- RINAP 3/1 Grayson, A.K. and Novotny, J. 2012 *The Royal Inscriptions of Sennacherib, King of Assyria (704–681 BC), Part 1*. The Royal Inscriptions of the Neo-Assyrian Period 3, no. 1.
- RINAP 4 Leichty, E. 2011 *The Royal Inscriptions of Esarhaddon, King of Assyria (680–669 BC)*. The Royal Inscriptions of the Neo-Assyrian Period 4.
- SAA State Archives of Assyria, 1–19.
- StAT 3 Faist, B. 2007 *Alltagstexte aus neuassyrischen Archiven und Bibliotheken der Stadt Assur*. Studien zu den Assur-Texten 3.
- For other abbreviations included in the article see CAD.

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## Textile production in the Neo-Babylonian Eanna archive

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This chapter presents a brief overview of textile production during the Neo-Babylonian period based on the textual record preserved from the archive of the Eanna temple. This archive comes from the city of Uruk, which was located in southern Mesopotamia (modern Iraq), and consists of roughly 8,000 cuneiform tablets written in Akkadian. Chronologically the archive spans approximately 150 years (c. 650–500 BCE), but a majority of the tablets date specifically to the Neo-Babylonian period (626–539 BCE).<sup>2</sup> The tablets discussed in this chapter stem from this period. While other text types – such as letters and legal proceedings – are also well attested, the archive consists primarily of the administrative records that the temple kept in order to maintain control over its valuable assets (*e.g.*, agricultural

properties, livestock, raw materials, workforce). The dossier of texts recording textile production belongs to this group.

### Textile production in the Eanna archive

Of the 8,000 texts surviving from the Eanna archive, only about 250 concern the production of textiles.<sup>3</sup> They record details about the manufacture, cleaning and decoration of the garments worn by the cultic statues worshipped in the Eanna temple.<sup>4</sup> The city of Uruk was the primary cult center for the goddess Ištar; but other deities, including the goddesses Nanāya, Bēltu-ša-Rēš and Ušur-amāssu, also had cult statues in the Eanna temple whose clothing provisions are recorded in the texts.<sup>5</sup> Textiles worn by humans are largely absent from the archive; the main exception being the <sup>tiš</sup>KUR.ra-garment, a woolen blanket or cape regularly provided to temple personnel as part of their rations or travel provisions.<sup>6</sup>

When describing the Eanna archive, Govert van Driel wrote: “The main purpose [of the archive] may indeed have been the assignation of labour and other resources on the one hand and of what was produced or bought on the other, and all the accounting that this implied. But we can also assume that there were other requirements immediately connected with the functioning of the institution as a sanctuary of an

1 I would like to thank Cecilie Brøns and Marie-Louise Nosch for inviting me to contribute to this volume despite having been unable to attend the “Textiles and Cult in the Mediterranean Area in the 1st Millennium BC” workshop in November 2013. This paper is based on a presentation made at the “Ancient Textiles Symposium” organised by Agnete Wisti Lassen at Yale University on November 13, 2014. It is a pleasure to thank her for arranging this gathering and the other participants in the symposium for their valuable feedback. Finally, I would like to thank Benjamin R. Foster and Ulla Kasten for permission to cite unpublished texts in the Yale Babylonian Collection and Michael Jursa for reading a draft of this paper. A more thorough discussion of the topics discussed here can be found in my dissertation: Payne 2007. Dates are provided in the following format: “NbK 5 vi 25” indicates that a tablet is dated to Nebuchadnezzar II’s (reigned 604–562 BCE) fifth year, the sixth month and the 25th day.

2 Jursa 2005, 138–139.

3 Payne 2007, 86.

4 For a detailed analysis of comparable material from the Eabbar archive in Sippar, see Zawadzki 2006; Zawadzki 2013.

5 For a comprehensive study of the deities of Uruk, see Beaulieu 2003.

6 Jursa 2010, 619 and n. 3279.



important deity.”<sup>7</sup> While the textile production served the cultic mission of the temple, the records concerning these activities originate from the administrative function van Driel described. A majority of the tablets documenting textile production in the Eanna archive record the distribution of materials *to* the craftsmen, the receipt of materials *from* the craftsmen, or payment to the craftsmen in exchange for their service.<sup>8</sup> As such, the texts fall into three main groups. First, are the texts that record the transfer of goods – often raw materials – from the temple stores into the possession of a craftsman. Such transactions are designated by the prepositional phrase *ina pāni* “in the possession of”. For example:

YOS 17, 254 (–17 iii 22)

<sup>1</sup>1/2 ma.na <sup>2</sup>si<sup>g</sup>hé.me.da.kur.ra <sup>3</sup>a-na <sup>4</sup>tú<sup>g</sup>úr<sup>meš</sup> <sup>5</sup>ina igi  
<sup>6</sup>BA-ša-a <sup>7</sup>lú<sup>u</sup>š.bar

“One-half mina of red dyed wool (*tabarru*) for the fringe is in the possession of (*ina pāni*) Iqīšāya, the weaver (*išparu*).”

Conversely, when craftsmen return items – generally finished goods – to the temple, the stative form of the verb *mahāru* (i.e. *mahir*) was used.<sup>9</sup>

NBC 4652 (Nbk 25 ii 15)

<sup>1</sup>9 ma.na 2/3 gín <sup>2</sup>tú<sup>g</sup>mi-ih-šu <sup>3</sup>ana dal-ti šá <sup>4</sup>tú<sup>g</sup>za-ra-ti  
<sup>5</sup>10 gín <sup>6</sup>si<sup>g</sup>ta-bar-ri <sup>7</sup>giššà.hab <sup>8</sup>Id-en-iq-bi <sup>9</sup>lú<sup>u</sup>š.bar igi-ir  
“Nine mina 45 shekels of woven cloth for the door of the tent (and) ten shekels of red wool (*tabarru*) dyed with <sup>10</sup>giššà.hab were received (*mahir*) from Bēl-iqbi.”

The final significant group of texts are those recording the payment of the workforce. Frequently, these are lengthy texts, recording numerous payments of barley, dates or silver. Since the recipients of these payments were dependents of the temple, and since the payments were often made in foodstuff, these payments have traditionally been understood as “rations”; but they should more accurately be understood as “salaries (in kind)” intended to cover the cost of living.<sup>10</sup> The example provided here is a short text recording a payment in beer.<sup>11</sup> Payment in processed goods (as opposed to unprocessed barley or dates) was made only

under special conditions, such as while travelling,<sup>12</sup> but the example provided here may reflect a bonus payment after a particularly onerous work obligation.

GCCI 1, 76 (Nbk 10+ xx xx)

<sup>1</sup>3 bán [ka]š<sup>hi.a</sup> <sup>2</sup>a-na <sup>3</sup>lú<sup>u</sup>š.bar bir-mi <sup>4</sup>gi-mil-lu <sup>5</sup>ma-hi-ir

“Three *sūtu* of beer were received from Gimillu for the weavers of colored cloth.”

### Textile workers

The textile workers in the Eanna temple belonged to two distinct social groups. First, were the prebendary craftsmen. These individuals “enjoyed the right to partake in the temple worship on account of [their] possession of the required legal title and on account of [their] ritual qualifications.”<sup>13</sup> They were also legally free (Akkadian: *mār banē*<sup>14</sup>) members of the social elite who performed the duties that required direct access to the cultic statues.<sup>15</sup> Craftsmen of this type were paid through the prebendary system, rather than through rations. The temple provided resources (either silver or in-kind) to cover the cost of the sacrificial offerings (*maššartu*), out of which were paid both the direct costs of the offerings (*sattukku*) and the income earned by the prebendary workers (*pappasu*).<sup>16</sup> This system was in place not only for certain textile workers within Neo-Babylonian temples but also for other artisans responsible for offerings, including brewers, bakers and butchers. The true value of these offices, however, was not merely – or even primarily – economic; much of their value derived from the social status and networking opportunities they provided.<sup>17</sup>

The second class of textile workers active in the Eanna temple were those legally dependent on the temple (*širku*). These individuals, who had a much lower social status and were generally less economically well off, comprised the vast majority of the workforce. They were paid in regular installments of rations and were organised in work teams

7 van Driel 1998, 62. See also Jursa 2004 for a discussion of accounting practices used in Neo-Babylonian archives.

8 While different administrative terminology is used, these three text types also predominate in Sippar, see Bongenaar 1997, 302–307.

9 Jursa 2005, 46–47, provides a good introduction to the difficulty that translating this verb has caused.

10 Jursa 2010, 297 and n. 1774.

11 Such beer texts have been studied by Kleber 2005.

12 Janković 2008.

13 Waerzeggers 2010, 34. Note that Waerzeggers prefers the term “priest” to the more commonly used “prebendary” when describing this role within the temple. As such, this group of craftsmen at Eanna could also be described as “priestly,” rather than “prebendary.” In addition to Waerzeggers 2010, see for example van Driel 2002 and Corò 2005 for more information about the prebendary system during the 1st millennium BCE.

14 Westbrook 2004.

15 Payne 2007, 11–13.

16 Bongenaar 1997, 142–144.

17 Jursa 2010, 155–168.

of five to ten men, supervised by a fellow craftsman.<sup>18</sup> They were also required to perform additional labor for the temple (e.g. chopping wood, digging canals or tending sheep),<sup>19</sup> and their attempts to escape their service to the temple are well documented<sup>20</sup> and no doubt indicate dissatisfaction with their position.

Textile work was divided among three distinct professions of textile craftsmen. First were the weavers or weavers of colored cloth (*išparu* and *išpar birmi*, respectively).<sup>21</sup> The weavers are the best documented textile profession within the Eanna archive and are mentioned in 182 texts.<sup>22</sup> Both prebendary and non-prebendary weavers were active within the temple; and they were responsible for making and repairing the cultic garments, as well as dyeing wool for use in the garments. Most of their work centered around the clothing ceremony (*lubuštu*), which took place at least once a month.<sup>23</sup> Any manual labor performed outside the temple by non-prebendary weavers was undertaken during gaps in the cultic calendar between *lubuštu*-ceremonies.

The second profession were the washermen (*ašlāku*), the least well attested textile group in the Eanna archive, known from only 45 texts.<sup>24</sup> This profession was made up exclusively of prebendary craftsmen, who were responsible for cleaning the sacred garments before and after the clothing ceremonies.

The final textile profession working in the Eanna temple were the launderers (*pūṣāyu*), attested in 66 texts.<sup>25</sup> While the etymology of the term derives from the verb meaning “to become white; to clean, to bleach, to launder” (*peṣû*),<sup>26</sup> in the Eanna temple they neither cleaned nor bleached the garments but rather were most frequently tasked with making the curtains that surrounded the temple’s cultic statues. The launderers were exclusively non-prebendary.

## Raw materials

Most of the textual records that survive from the Eanna temple’s textile industry result from its efforts to maintain oversight of its valuable resources. As noted above, these texts record the transfer of raw materials from the temple stores to the craftsmen (*ina pāni*-texts), as well as the return of finished goods from the craftsmen back into the temple’s possession (*mahir*-texts). Finished goods – such as garments or jewellery – could also be transferred within the temple using similar document types. For textile production, three main resources are attested: wool, linen and dyeing materials.

Wool was the primary cash crop for the Eanna archive and approximately 100 tons of wool were produced annually.<sup>27</sup> As a result, the weavers’ need for wool could be met internally, and these transfers (without payment) were generally recorded as single line items within much longer texts recording the sale of wool for silver.

Linen, while less common than wool, was also frequently attested in the textile corpus of the Eanna archive.<sup>28</sup> This commodity, however, was not produced locally and was instead acquired by the temple through trade.<sup>29</sup> A single text (YBC 9273) also records that a launderer was sent to purchase linen.<sup>30</sup>

Finally, the textile workers were also responsible for the dyes and mordants used to dye the sacred garments.<sup>31</sup> These commodities were acquired by trade and were valuable enough that the temple kept detailed records of how much dyeing material was being used, frequently also noting which sacred garments were being dyed. A summary of the most frequently attested dyes in the Eanna archive follows:

18 Payne 2007, 111–114 and 141–145.

19 Payne 2007, 15 and 140.

20 Dandamaev 1984, 490–499 and MacGinnis 2003.

21 These titles were used interchangeably in the Eanna temple to refer to the craftsmen who performed both the weaving and the dyeing obligations. This was not the case in the Ebabbar temple, however, where the dyeing was undertaken by the *išpar birmi* (Zawadzki 2006, 59–61). For a more thorough discussion of the weavers of the Eanna archive, see Payne 2007, 116–154.

22 Payne 2007, 116.

23 Beaulieu 2003, 36–39 and Payne 2007, 125–128.

24 See Payne 2007, 87–100, for a more detailed discussion of the washermen of Eanna.

25 See Payne 2007, 100–116, for a more detailed discussion of the launderers of Eanna.

26 CAD P, 334 (sub *peṣû*) and 538 (sub *pūṣaja*).

27 See Kleber 2010 for a discussion of the wool industry (the approximate annual wool income is based on information provided on 595) and Kozuh 2014 for a discussion of the temple’s sheep.

28 The dissertation by Louise Quillien (titled: *Les textiles en Mésopotamie, techniques de production, circuits d’échanges et significations sociales, 750–500 av. J.-C.*) significantly adds to our understanding of linen production and linen garments during the Neo-Babylonian period.

29 See, for example, the texts published by Joannès 1999 and Oppenheim 1967. These texts also present information concerning the procurement of dyeing materials for the temple.

30 Payne 2007, 109–110.

31 For more information about the dyes and mordants used in the Eanna temple, see for now Payne 2007, 134–141. The table provided here summarises material originally presented on 135–136, where additional citations and supporting documentation can be found.

Table 15.1

| <i>Dyed cloth</i> | <i>Color</i>  | <i>Dye used</i>         | <i>Identification</i> |
|-------------------|---------------|-------------------------|-----------------------|
| <i>argamannu</i>  | red-purple    | <i>hathūru</i>          |                       |
| <i>hašhūru</i>    | green         | (unspecified)           |                       |
| <i>hašhūru</i>    | “apple color” | <i>hathūru</i> (?)      |                       |
| <i>tabarru</i>    | shades of red | <i>hathūru</i>          |                       |
|                   |               | <i>hūratu</i>           | Madder                |
|                   |               | <i>inzahurētu</i>       | Kermes                |
|                   |               | gīš <sup>3</sup> ša.hab |                       |
| <i>takiltu</i>    | (blue-)purple | (unspecified)           | mollusks or woad      |

### *Finished garments*

In addition to overseeing the workforce and raw materials, the textual record also provides significant information about the finished garments that adorned the cult statues of the Eanna temple, particularly the elaborately decorated *kusītu*-garments of Ištar and Nanāya.<sup>32</sup> The garments were produced by the textile workers and decorated with gold sequins and jewellery manufactured and maintained by the temple's metal workers and jewellers.<sup>33</sup> The wardrobe of the cultic statues consisted of several layers of textiles made of the materials and colours described above. Garments of various styles were accented by scarfs, headbands, belts, sashes and other wraps. These ensembles were further accessorised with jewels made primarily of gold and semi-precious stones. Necklaces, tiaras, bracelets, rings and decorated breastplates are among the jewels attested, as are sequins of various shapes that were sown into some styles of garments. Paul-Alain Beaulieu provides an invaluable summary of evidence for the garments and jewellery attested for each deity at Eanna, though a thorough reconstruction of this attire remains to be prepared.<sup>34</sup>

## Conclusion

The tablets preserved from the Eanna archive provide information about textile production during the mid-first millennium BCE. Roughly 250 tablets document the activities of craftsmen of three textile professions from at least two social classes. Furthermore, the tablets also record information about the raw and finished goods at their

disposal. Taken as a group, this corpus provides significant insight into the manufacture of the elaborate garments that clothed the cultic statues of the Eanna temple. Further study should be undertaken to analyse this material in combination with the parallel material preserved from the Ebabbar temple archive in Sippar.

## Abbreviations

Abbreviations used are:

CAD Chicago Assyrian Dictionary.

GCCI I R.P. Dougherty, *Goucher College Cuneiform Inscriptions*, Vol. I (1923).

NBC Tablets in the Nies Babylonian Collection (housed at Yale).

YBC Tablets in the Yale Babylonian Collection (New Haven, CT).

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32 Oppenheim 1949 remains the classic study of these garments, and see more recently Beaulieu 2003, 15–25 and Zawadzki 2006.

33 The smiths and jewellers of Eanna are treated in Payne 2007, ch. 5.

34 Beaulieu 2003, especially his overview of the material provided in ch. 1.

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## The description of Anāhitā's attire in the *Yāšt* 5

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Anāhitā, called by her full name Arəduuī Sūrā Anāhitā, is the Zoroastrian goddess of the waters, to whom one of the most extensive hymns of the Avestan literature, the *Yāšt* 5, is dedicated.

The Zoroastrian religion, taking its name from the prophet Zoroaster (*zaraθuštra-* in Avestan), developed in south-east Iran and central Asia out of the Indo-Iranian religious practices dating back to the 2nd millennium BCE, and is one of the few ancient Indo-European religions that still survive in some communities in Iran, India and the diaspora. The most ancient Zoroastrian sacred texts, designated the Avesta, were orally composed and transmitted during the 2nd and 1st millennia BCE in the most archaic Iranian language preserved, known as Avestan, until they were eventually set down in writing in manuscripts going back to the beginning of the 2nd millennium CE. The difficulties of understanding this language, no longer spoken but still needed for the ritual recitations, motivated several priests to render the Avestan texts into Pahlavi, the Middle Iranian language of the Sasanian Dynasty (CE 224–651), from which they were eventually translated into New Persian in Iran, and into Sanskrit and Gujarati in India.

The corpus of Avestan literature is preserved in two types of manuscripts: liturgical and accompanied by Pahlavi translation. The former includes the texts recited in the long liturgies (that is, *Yasna*, *Yasna ī Rapihwin*, *Wīsperad*, *Wīdēwdād* and *Wīštāsp Yāšt*) and in

the short liturgies (the so-called *Xorde Avesta* and the *Yāšt*), in which various Avestan texts are combined and ritual instructions in Pahlavi, New Persian or Gujarati are added as a guide to the performance of the ritual. The manuscripts with Pahlavi translation contain collections in which these ritual instructions are generally omitted and each Avestan text is accompanied by its Pahlavi translation with commentary, known as *Zand*.

The *Yāšt*, one of which is dedicated to the goddess Anāhitā, are attested either in manuscripts containing selections of hymns or in manuscripts of the short liturgies, generally designated the *Xorde Avesta* or Small Avesta, although some of them, especially the long hymns, like the one dedicated to Anāhitā, were probably part of longer liturgies in earlier times.

The *Yāšt* or Hymn to Anāhitā has been preserved in 19 manuscripts, the oldest of which are F1 and F4 (formerly known as E1), both written in Navsari (India) by Āsadin Kākā in CE 1591 and by Šāpuhr Hōšang Āsā in CE 1601 respectively. They are available in JamaspAsa's (1991) and Kotwal and Hintze's (2008) facsimile editions.<sup>2</sup> Because this *Yāšt* is the fifth in the list of hymns in these two manuscripts, it is usually quoted by scholars as the *Yāšt* 5, but its title in these manuscripts is actually *Ābān yāšt* "Hymn to the Waters" or *Ardwīsūr yāšt* "Hymn to Ardwīsūr", the Pahlavi name of Anāhitā.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Critical edition of the Avestan text in Westergaard 1852–1854, 172 and Geldner 1886–1896, 2.101; Avestan text and German translation in Oettinger 1983, 123–124; English translation in Darmesteter 1882, 83; German translation in Windischmann 1856, 115; Spiegel 1852–1863, 3.59; Wolff 1901, 181; Lommel 1927, 43–44 and Weller 1938, 152; French translation in Darmesteter 1892–1893, 2.396 and Pirart 2010, 82; French translation of some passages in Pirart 2003.

<sup>3</sup> Its Pāzand title is *āvaqn. yasta* in the manuscript F1, f. 58v, l. 3; *āvaqn. yāšt* in F4, f. 176r, l. 2; *āvaqn. yāšt* in G72, f. 160r, ll.

The *Yašt* 5 presents one of the most vivid descriptions of the sumptuous dress and ornaments of a goddess in the Zoroastrian literature, especially in the following passages:

*Yašt* 5.64:<sup>4</sup>

*upa.tacaṭ*.<sup>5</sup> *arəduuī*.<sup>6</sup> *sūra*.<sup>7</sup> *anāhita*.<sup>8</sup> *kaininō*.<sup>9</sup> *kəhrpa*.<sup>10</sup>  
*srīraiīā*.<sup>11</sup> *aš.amaiīā*.<sup>12</sup> *huraōdaiīā*.<sup>13</sup> *uskāt.yāstaiīā*.<sup>14</sup>  
*ərəzuuuiḡiīō*.<sup>15</sup> *raēuuat.ciḡrəm.āzātaiīā*.<sup>16</sup> *nizəṅga*.<sup>17</sup>  
*aōḡra*.<sup>18</sup> *\*paitišmuxta*.<sup>19</sup> *zaraniīō.uruuīxšna*.<sup>20</sup> *bāmiia*.<sup>21</sup>

6 – 7; *āvq. iiaṣta* in G63, f. 148r, ll. 4 – 5; *yast. āvq* in P13, f. 226r, l. 2; *yaṣta. āβqn* in R115, f. 486, l. 8; *āvq. iiaṣt* in X892.5Av3 I 2, f. 208r, ll. 7 – 8; but *arəduuīsūr. yast* in T49, f. 1v, l. 2; *arduī. sūr. yaṣt* in E1, f. 1v, l. 5; *arduīsūr. yaṣtō* in G13, f. 2v, l. 3; *āvq. arṡūsūr. yaṣta* in G118, f. 57r, l. 8; *yaṣt. arəduuī. sūr* in G12, f. 1v, l. 2.

4 The Avestan texts of *Yašt* 5 reproduced in this article have been critically edited by me on the basis of my collation of the following manuscripts, quoted in chronological order: F4 (CE 1591, AY 960), F1 (CE 1601, AY 970), G72 (CE 1659, Saṁvat 1716), G63 (CE 1755, AY 1124), P13 (= Suppl. Pers. 31, end of the 18th century), K12 (CE 1801, AY 1170), T49 (CE 1835, Saṁvat 1892), E1 (CE 1836, AY 1205), R115 (CE 1840, Saṁvat 1896), G13 (CE 1852, Saṁvat 1909), G118 (CE 1864, AY 1233), G12 and X892.5Av3 I 2. I could not collate the manuscripts G74, J10, M12 (currently lost), L18, Pt1 (CE 1625, AY 994, currently lost) and W2 used by Geldner 1886–1896 in his edition.

5 *upata.caṭ* P13, K12; *upatacaṭ* R115, G12; *upataciṭ* G118.

6 *arəduuī* F4; *arəduuī* P13; *arəduuī* E1, G13, G12.

7 *arəduuīsūra* G72; *sūr* P13; *arəduuīsūr* K12, R115; *arəduuīsūra* T49; *arəduuīsūr* G118.

8 *anāheta* G72; *anāhiti* K12, E1, R115, G13, G118.

9 *kaininō* F1, G63, P13, T49, G118; *kainiīnō* F4, G72, R115; *kənīnō* K12, E1, G13, G12.

10 *kəhrpa* P13; *kəhrpe* K12; *kahrpa* E1; *kəhrpa* R115; *kihərpe* G118; *karapa* G12.

11 *srīraiīā* F1, G72, E1, G12; *srīrā* G63; *srīraiīā* P13, K12; *srīriīā* T49, R115.

12 *ašamaiīā* F1, G72, G63, P13, T49; *asmāiīā* K12, G118; *ašmaiīā* E1, G13, G12; *ašamaiia* R115.

13 *hurōdaiīā* F4 (-d del.); *hurōdaiīā* G72; *huruḡiīā* K12; *ahuraodaiīā* E1; *haorudaiīā* R115; *haourōdaiīā* G118; *haourudaiīā* G12.

14 *usakat.yāstaiīā* P13; *uskāt.yāstaiīā* T49; *yāuskāt.yāstaiīā* E1 (pr. y- del.); *uskāt.yāstaiīā* G13; *uskāt.yāstaiīā* G12.

15 *ərəzauuuiḡiīō* G63, T49; *ərəzuuaēḡiīō* G118.

16 *raēuuat.ciḡrəm.āzātaiīā* G63, T49; *raēuuat.ciḡrəm.āzātaiīā* K12; *raēuuat.ciḡrəm.āzātaiīā* E1; *raēuuat.ciḡrəm.āzātaiīā* G13; *raēuuat.ciḡrəm.āzātaiīā* G118; *raēuuat.ciḡrəm.āzātaiīā* G12.

17 *nizəṅga* G63; *nizəṅhe* K12; *nizəṅg* T49; *nizəṅg* R115; *nejəṅhe* G118.

18 *uaōḡra* G72 (u- del.); *aoiḡra* K12; *aoḡrā* R115; *ōiḡre* G118; *aōi.ḡri* G12.

19 *pāiti.šmuxta* F1, F4, G72, G63; *paiti.šmuxta* P13, R115; *pāiti. smōxta* K12; *paiti.šmuxta* T49; *paiti.šmaxta* E1, G12; *paiti. šmaxti* G13; *pāiti.šmoxtahe* G118.

20 *zaraniīō.uruuīxšna* K12; *zaraniīō.ḡūruuīxšna* E1; *zaraniīō. uruuīxšni* R115; *zaranaiīō.aouru.xšne* G118; *zaraniīō. uruuīxšni* G12.

21 *zaranaiīō.uruuīxšnabāmiia* P13; *bāmaiia* T49, E1, G12; *bāmiīāhā* G13.

From above *Arəduuī Sūrā Anāhitā* hastens in the body of a maid, of a beautiful, very powerful, well-formed, high and right girded noble (maid) of rich appearance, shod with shoes in the lower (part of the) legs, with golden shoelaces, radiant.

*Yašt* 5.78:

*upa.tacaṭ*.<sup>22</sup> *arəduuī*.<sup>23</sup> *sūra*.<sup>24</sup> *anāhita*.<sup>25</sup> *kaininō*.<sup>26</sup>  
*kəhrpa*.<sup>27</sup> *srīraiīā*.<sup>28</sup>

*\*aš.amaiīā*.<sup>29</sup> *huraōdaiīā*.<sup>30</sup> *uskāt.yāstaiīā*.<sup>31</sup>  
*ərəzuuuiḡiīō*.<sup>32</sup>

*raēuuat.ciḡrəm.āzātaiīā*.<sup>33</sup> *zaraniia*.<sup>34</sup> *aōḡra*.<sup>35</sup>  
*\*paitišmuxta*.<sup>36</sup> *yā. vīspō.pīša*.<sup>37</sup> *bāmiia*.<sup>38</sup> (...)

From above *Arəduuī Sūrā Anāhitā* hastens in the body of a maid, of a beautiful, very powerful, well-formed, high and right girded noble (maid) of rich appearance, shod with golden shoes, she, having all (sorts of) ornaments, radiant. (...)

22 *upa.taciṭ* G63; *upataaṭ* P13; *upatacaṭ* K12, G118, G12; *upataciṭ* E1, G13; *upataṭ* R115.

23 *ardūī* P13; *arəduuī* E1, G13, G12.

24 *arəduuīsūra* G72; *sūr* P13; *arəduuīsūr* K12; *arəduuīsūra* T49; *arəduuīsūr* R115, G118.

25 *anāhite* F4, G72, K12; *anāhiti* P13, T49, E1, R115, G13, G118.

26 *kaininō* K12, T49, E1, G13, G12; *kainiīnō* G118.

27 *kəhrpa* K12, R115; *kahrpa* T49; *kihərpe* G118.

28 *srīraiīā* F1, F4, G72, E1, G12; *srīrā* G63; *srīrā* P13, R115; *srīrīā* K12; *srīriīā* T49; *srāraiīā* G118.

29 *ašamaiīā* F1, F4, G72, G63, P13, E1, R115; *asmāiīā* K12; *ašmaiīā* T49, G13, G12; *āsmāiīā* G118.

30 *hurōdaiīā* F4, G72; *haorudaiīā* G63; *huruḡaiīā* K12; *huraodaiīā* T49; *haraodaiīā* E1; *ahūrō.daiīā* G118; *haourudaiīā* G12.

31 *uskāt.yāstaiīā* T49; *uskāt.yāstaiīā* E1, G13; *uskāt.yāstaiīā* G12.

32 *ərəzauuuiḡiīō* F4, G72; *ərəjōiḡiīō* K12; *ərəzuuuiḡiīō* G118; *ərəzauuuiḡiīō* G12.

33 *raēuuat.ciḡrəm.āzātaiīā* G63; *raēuuat.ciḡrəm.āzātaiīā* P13, G118; *raēuuat.ciḡrəm.āzātaiīā* K12; *raēuuat.ciḡrəm.āzātaiīā* T49; *raēuuat.ciḡrəm.āzātaiīā* E1, G13; *raēuuat.ciḡrəm.āzātaiīā* R115; *raēuuat.ciḡrəm.āzātaiīā* G12.

34 *zaraniia* F1, F4, G72, G63, T49; *zarənaiia* P13; *zaraniīō* K12; *zaranaiīō* R115; *zarənaiia* G118

35 *ōḡra* K12; *aoiḡrəm* R115 (-m del.).

36 *pāiti.šmuxta* F1, F4, G63; *pāiti.xšmuxta* G72; *pāitš.muxta* P13; *pāiti.smōxta* K12; *pāiti.šamuxta* T49; *pāiti.šamaxti* E1; *apāitš.muxta* R115; *pāiti.šmaxti* G13; *pāiti.samuxtahe* G118; *pāiti.šəmuxta* G12.

37 *vīspō.pīša* G63; *vīspō.pīš* P13; *vīspō.pīša* K12, E1, G13, G12; *yāvīspō.pīš* R115; *vīspō.paišahe* G118.

38 *bāmaiia* E1, G13.

Yašt 5.123:

*zaranaēnəm*.<sup>39</sup> *paiti.dānəm*.<sup>40</sup> \**vaṇ<sup>h</sup>hi*.<sup>41</sup> *hištaite*.<sup>42</sup>  
+*dražimna*.<sup>43</sup> *arəduuī*.<sup>44</sup> *sūra*.<sup>45</sup> *anāhita*.<sup>46</sup> (...)

Fastening his golden mouth-veil the good one stands,  
Arəduuī Sūrā Anāhitā. (...)

Yašt 5.126:

*yā*. *hištaite*.<sup>47</sup> *frauuaēdāmna*.<sup>48</sup> *arəduuī*.<sup>49</sup> *sūra*.<sup>50</sup>  
*anāhita*.<sup>51</sup> *kaininō*.<sup>52</sup> *kəhrpa*.<sup>53</sup> *srīraiiā*.<sup>54</sup> +*aš.amaiiā*.<sup>55</sup>  
*huraōdaiiā*.<sup>56</sup> *uskāt.yāstaiiā*.<sup>57</sup> *ərazuuaiθiiō*.<sup>58</sup>

*raēuuat.ciθrəm.āzātaiiā*.<sup>59</sup> *frazušəm*.<sup>60</sup> *aḍkəm*.<sup>61</sup>  
*vaṇhānəm*. *pōuru.paxštəm*.<sup>62</sup> *zaranaēnəm*.<sup>63</sup>

Arəduuī Sūrā Anāhitā, who stands recognizable in  
the body of a maid, of a beautiful, very powerful,  
well-formed, high and right girded noble (maid) of  
rich appearance, wearing a pleasing cloak of much  
shorn (wool),<sup>64</sup> golden.

Yašt 5.127:

*bāda*.<sup>65</sup> *yaθa.mqm*.<sup>66</sup> *barəsmō.zasta*.<sup>67</sup> *frā*. *gaōšāuuara*.<sup>68</sup>  
*sīspəmna*.<sup>69</sup> *caθru.karana*.<sup>70</sup> *zaranaēnəm*.<sup>71</sup> *mainim*.<sup>72</sup>  
*baraṭ*.<sup>73</sup> *huuāzāta*.<sup>74</sup> *arəduuī*.<sup>75</sup> *sūra*.<sup>76</sup> *anāhita*.<sup>77</sup> *upa*.

- 39 *zaranēnəm* G63; *zaranainəm* K12; *zarənaninəm* R115; *zaranaēnəm* G12.  
40 *paitidānəm* R115, G118.  
41 *vaṇhuuī* F1, F4, G72, P13, G12; *vaṇuhi* G63, E1, G13; *vaṇhuua* K12; *vaṇhuue* T49; *vaṇhuiē* R115; *vaṇhē* G118.  
42 *haištaiti* G63, R115; *hištaete* P13; *hištaita* K12; *hištaēta* E1; *hištaiti* G13; *hštiiē* G118; *hištaitē* G12.  
43 *dražimnō* F1; *drižimənō* F4; *dražimənō* G72; *dražimanō* G63, G12; *draožimnō* P13; *darəzəmanō* K12; *daražimanō* T49, G118; *dražimanaō* E1; *draožimanō* R115; *darižamanō* G13.  
44 *arəduuī* P13; *arəduū* K12; *arəduuī* E1, R115, G13.  
45 *arəduuīsūra* G72; *sūr* K12, R115; *arəduuīsūra* T49; *arəduuīsūr* G118.  
46 *anāhiti* K12, T49, E1, R115, G13, G118, G12.  
47 *hištaiti* G63, X892.5Av3 I 2; *hištaite* K12; *haištaite* E1; *yāhištaita* R115; *hištaitē* G13, G118; *yāhastaiti* G12.  
48 *frauuaē.δəmana* G63, X892.5Av3 I 2; *frauuaēdāmna* P13, R115; *frauuaōa.mana* K12; *friuuaō aimana* T49; *frauuiādanmana* E1; *frauuaōimana* G13; *frauuaēda.mana* G118; *frauuiādimana* G12.  
49 *arəduuī* E1, G13, G12, X892.5Av3 I 2.  
50 *arəduuīsūra* F4, G72, P13; *arəduīsūr* K12; *arəduuīsūra* T49; *arəduuīsūr* R115, G118.  
51 *anāhiti* K12, T49, E1, R115, G13, G12; *anāhēti* G118.  
52 *kaininō* G72; *kaininō* K12, T49, G118; *kaenīnō* E1, G13; *kininō* R115; *kaeniinō* G12.  
53 *kəhrpa* P13; *kəhərpe* K12; *kəhrpahe* E1, G13; *kəhərpō* R115; *kəhərpae* G118.  
54 *srīrā* G63, P13, X892.5Av3 I 2; *srīraiiā* K12; *srīraiiā* T49; *srīraiiāiā* E1 (pr. –raii- del.); *srīriiā* G118; *sriiraiiā* G12.  
55 *ašamaiiā* F1, F4, G72, P13; *ašamiiā* G63, T49, X892.5Av3 I 2; *asmaiiā* K12, G12; *ašmaiā* T49, R115, G13; *ašmōiā* G118.  
56 *haorudaiiā* G63; *huruḍaiiā* K12; *huraodiiā* T49; *haorudaiiā* G118.  
57 *us.kāt.yāstaiiā* K12; *uskāt.yāstiiā* T49; *uskāt.yāstaiiā* E1, G13.  
58 *ərazuuaiθiiō* G63, T49; *ərazōiθiiō* K12, G118.

- 59 *raēuuat.ciθrəm.azātaiiā* K12; *raēuuat.ciθrəm.āzātaiiā* T49; *raēuuat.ciθrəm.azātaiiā* E1, G13; *raēuuat.ciθrəm.ājātaiiā* G118; *raēuuat.ciθrəm.azātaiiā* G12.  
60 *frazəušəm* G72; *frazaošəm* P13, K12, G118; *frazušəm* E1, G13, G12; *frazaošəm* R115.  
61 *aḍakəm* G72, K12, T49, R115, G118, G12; *adaḍakəm* E1, G13.  
62 *pōuru.paxštīm* P13, G12; *pōuruš.paxištīm* K12; *paouru.paxštīm* T49; *paourupaxštīm* R115; *paouru.paxštəm* G118; *pōuru.paxštəm* X892.5Av3 I 2.  
63 *zaranēnəm* F4; *zaranenəm* G72; *zaranainəm* P13, K12, G118; *zaraninəm* R115.  
64 Perhaps from Proto-Indo-Iranian \**paš-* “to shave, to shear.” See Cheung 2007, 299.  
65 *bāt* G63, K12, E1, G13, G12; *bāta* P13.  
66 *yaθamqm* G63 (sec. -a- del.); *yaθamqm* P13; *bādayaθamqm* R115.  
67 *barəsmō.zastā* G63, X892.5Av3 I 2; *barəsmō.jasta* K12; *barəsmō.zasti* E1, G13, G12; *barəsmō.zašta* R115; *barə.smō.jasta* G118.  
68 *frāgaōšāuuara* F1, F4, G63, P13; *gaošāuuarə* K12, T49; *frāgaōšāuuara* E1; *frāgaōšāuuarə* R115; *fragaōšāuuarə* G13; *frāgaōšāuuara* G118; *fragō.šāuuara* G12.  
69 *sīspa.maine* K12; *sīspamana* T49; *sīspəmana* E1, G13; *sīspəna* R115; *sīspə.mane* G118; *sīspaməna* G12.  
70 *caθrukarana* G72, X892.5Av3 I 2; *ciθrō.karana* K12, R115; *ciθru.kaira* E1, G13; *ciθrō.karane* G118; *ciθru.kara* G12.  
71 *zaranaēni* F1, F4, G72, G63, R115; *zaranainəm* K12; *zaranaine* T49; *zaranaēna* E1, G13; *zaranaēne* G118.  
72 *minum* F1, G63; *minim* F4, G72; *zaranaēnimum* P13; *mainum* K12, G118; *zaranaēnimum* X892.5Av3 I 2.  
73 *minubarat* R115.  
74 *huuāzāiti* K12; *huuāta* R115; *huājāiti* G118.  
75 *arəduuī* P13, K12, G13, G12; *arəduuīm* E1; *arəḍ*. R115.  
76 *arəduuīsūra* G72; *sūr* K12; *arəduuīsūra* T49; R115 (*sūra*. *anāhita* om.); *arəduuīsūr* G118.  
77 *anāhite* K12, T49; *anāhiti* E1, G13, G118, G12.

*tqm.*<sup>78</sup> *srīrqm.*<sup>79</sup> *manaōḡrim.*<sup>80</sup> *hā.hē.*<sup>81</sup> *maīdim.*<sup>82</sup> *niiāzata.*<sup>83</sup> *yaḡaca.* *hukərəpta.*<sup>84</sup> *fštāna.*<sup>85</sup> *yaḡaca.* *aḡhən.*<sup>86</sup> *niuuāzāna.*<sup>87</sup>

With the *barəsman*–twigs in her hands as usual, rocking forward her squared earrings, she wears a golden necklace,<sup>88</sup> the very noble Arəduuī Sūrā Anāhitā, over her beautiful neck. She tightens her waist and her well-formed breasts likewise, so that they are seductive.

Yašt 5.128:

*upairi.*<sup>89</sup> *pusqm.*<sup>90</sup> *baṇdaiiata.*<sup>91</sup> *arəduuī.*<sup>92</sup> *sūra.*<sup>93</sup> *anāhita.*<sup>94</sup> *satō.straḡhqm.*<sup>95</sup> *zaranaēnīm.*<sup>96</sup> *ašta.* *kaōždqm.*<sup>97</sup> *raḡa.kairiiqm.*<sup>98</sup> *drafšakauuaitīm.*<sup>99</sup> *srīrqm.*<sup>100</sup> *anu.pōiḡḡaitīm.*<sup>101</sup> *hukərətm.*<sup>102</sup>

A crown she ties around, Arəduuī Sūrā Anāhitā, with hundred *straḡhā*– (?), golden, with eight towers,<sup>103</sup> with a victorious chariot, endowed with a banner, beautiful, swollen above, well made.

78 *upatqm* F4, G72, G63, P13, K12, R115, G118, G12, X892.5Av3 I 2; *upātqm* E1, G13.

79 *sarīrqm* K12.

80 *manō.ḡrim* G72; *manō.ḡrəm* G63, P13, R115, G118; *manōḡrīm* K12; *manōiḡrīm* T49, E1, G13, G12; *manōḡrəm* X892.5Av3 I 2.

81 *hāhē* G72, G63, K12, T49, X892.5Av3 I 2; *hāmē* P13; *hāmē* R115.

82 *miḡim* F1, F4, G72, P13, R115; *miḡəm* G63, X892.5Av3 I 2; *maeḡəm* K12; *maiḡəm* T49, G118; *hāhēiminum* E1, G13, G12.

83 *zniiāzata* G72; *niiāzaiti* K12; *naiiāzata* T49; *nīāzāti* E1; *naiiāzaiti* G13; *niiāzāti* G118; *nī.āzāta* G12.

84 *hukərəptai* G72; *hukərəpata* K12; *hukərəpti* E1, G13; *hukəhrpata* R115.

85 *frastāne* K12; *fštāne* E1, G13, G118; *faštāne* G12.

86 *aḡhən* K12; *yaḡacaḡhəm* E1, G13, G12; *aḡhəne* G118.

87 *nauuāzāna* F4; *nauuazāna* G72; *nauuāzāite* K12; *niuuāzāna* E1; *niuuāzāne* G13, G12; *naēuuāzāne* G118.

88 Although Scheftelowitz 1903, 167, who read this word as *minum*, considered Av. *minu*– a loanword from Assyrian *menu* (*meānu*, *minnu*) “crown, royal headgear” (Oppenheim and Reiner 1977 [2004], 19–20), the connection with Ved. *maṇi*– “necklace” (Mayrhofer 1992–2001, 2.293) proposed by Windischmann 1856, 115 is to be preferred, though with an emendation. In my opinion, the attested *zaranaēni*. *minum* must be emended by *zaranaēnəm*. *mainim* on the basis of the Vedic parallel *hiraṇyena maṇinā* “with a golden necklace” (RV 1.33.8). If my emendation is right, this Avestan syntagm would be the Iranian heir of an Indo-Iranian formula \**ḡH-an-<sup>+</sup>maṇi*–, also inherited by the Avestan compound *zarənu-maini*– “having a golden necklace (epithet of the vulture).”

89 *upərai* G63; *upərə* K12.

90 *pisqm* F4, G72; *pusām* K12; *pušqm* E1, G13, G12.

91 *baṇḡaiiaete* K12; *baṇḡaiiaeti* E1; *baṇḡaiiata* R115; *baṇḡaiiaeti* G13; *baṇḡaiiēti* G118; *baṇḡaiieiti* G12; *baṇḡaiiaṇta* X892.5Av3 I 2.

92 *arəḡuī* K12; *arəḡuuī* E1, G13; *arəḡuu*. R115; *arduū* X892.5Av3 I 2.

93 *arəḡuūisūra* G72; *arəḡuūisra* P13; *sūr* K12; *arəḡuūisūra* T49; R115 (*sūra*. *anāhita* om.); *arəḡ uūisūr* G118.

94 *anāihiti* K12; *anāhite* T49; *anāhiti* E1, G13, G118.

95 *satōstaranḡhqm* K12; *stō.staranḡhqm* T49, E1, G13, G12; *satō.staranḡhqm* R115; *staostarqm.aḡhqm* G118.

96 *zaranaīnīm* K12, T49; *zaranaīnəm* R115, G118.

97 *ašti.kōzdaqm* K12; *ašta.kaoždaqm* T49; *ašta.kōzdaqm* E1, G13; *ašt.kaozdaqm* R115; *ašti.koždaraqm* G118; *ašta.kōiždaqm* G12.

98 *ašta.kaož.dqmarāḡa.kairiiqm* P13; *marāḡa.kairiiqm* R115.

99 *drafšakauuaitīm* F1, F4; *drafša.kauuaitīm* G72; *darafša.kauuaitīm* G63 (s.l. -ī- *pro-ā* corr.), K12, T49; *darafšakauuaitīm* E1; *darafšakauuaitīm* R115; *darafš.kauuaitīm* G13; *darafšō.kūaitīm* G118; *drafš.kauuaitīm* G12; *darafšakauuaitīm* X892.5Av3 I 2.

100 *sarīrqm* G63, K12; *sūrqm* E1, G13, G12.

101 *anu.pōiḡḡaitīm* F4; *anupōurḡḡaitīm* G72; *anu.pōiḡḡitīm* G63, X892.5Av3 I 2; *anō.paoḡaḡitīm* K12; *anu.puḡḡitīm* T49; *anōpōiḡḡaitīm* E1, G13; *anupōiḡḡatəm* R115; *anu.poiḡḡaitīm* G118; *anupōiḡḡaitīm* G12.

102 *hukərətm* F1, F4, G63; *hikərətm* G72.

103 I prefer Panaino’s 2000, 38 translation, although Bailey’s 1979, 63 (s.v. *kūšda*– “mansion, palace”) translation “with eight tiers” is possible as well.



Yašt 5.129:

\**baßraēna*.<sup>104</sup> \**vastra*.<sup>105</sup> *vaṇhata*.<sup>106</sup> *arəduuī*.<sup>107</sup> *sūra*.<sup>108</sup>  
*anāhita*.<sup>109</sup> *ṅrisatanqm*.<sup>110</sup> *baßbranqm*.<sup>111</sup> *caturā*.<sup>112</sup>  
*zīzanatqm*.<sup>113</sup> *yaṭ. asti*.<sup>114</sup> *baßriš*.<sup>115</sup> *sraēšta*.<sup>116</sup> *yaṭa. yaṭ.*  
*asti*.<sup>117</sup> *gaōnō.tāma*.<sup>118</sup> [*baßriš*.<sup>119</sup> *bauuaiti*.<sup>120</sup> *upāpō*.<sup>121</sup>  
*yaṭa. kərətəm*.<sup>122</sup> *ṅbarštāi*.<sup>123</sup> *zrūne*.<sup>124</sup> \**caramā*.<sup>125</sup>

- 104 *baßraini* F1, F4, G72, P13; *baßaraini* G63; *baßarane* K12; *baßarəna* T49, G12; *baßarana* E1; *baßarini* R115; *baßarana* G13; *bē.varəne* G118; *baßraina* X892.5Av3 I 2.  
 105 *vastrā* F1, F4, G72, G63, P13, E1, G118, G12, X892.5Av3 I 2; *vastarā* K12, T49, R115, G13.  
 106 *vaṇhāta* G63, X892.5Av3 I 2; *vaṇhata* K12; *vaṇhaiti* E1, G13, G118.  
 107 *arəduuīm* E1, G13.  
 108 *arəduuīsūra* P13; *arəduuīsūr* K12; *arəduuīsūra* T49, X892.5Av3 I 2; *arəduuīsūr* R115, G118.  
 109 *anāhiti* K12, E1, R115, G13; *anāhite* T49; *anāhēti* G118.  
 110 *taṅrisatanqm* F4 (*ta-* del.); *ṅrištānqm* G63, E1, G13; *ṅaristanqm* K12; *ṅristanqm* T49; *ṅrsatanqm* R115; *ṅristanqm* G118, G12, X892.5Av3 I 2.  
 111 P13 (*baßbranqm*. ... *asti* om.); *baršsṅbaranqm* K12 (*-ršs-* del.); *baßaranqm* T49, R115, G13, G12; *bēṅbaranqm* G118.  
 112 *catu.rā* F1, F4, G72; *catura* K12, G118, G12; *citurā* E1, G13; *caṅura* R115.  
 113 *zīzanatqm* K12, T49; *zīrazanatqm* R115; *zīzanantqm* G118.  
 114 *ašti* E1, G13.  
 115 *baßariš* G63, K12; *baßarāš* T49; *bißariš* E1, G13; *astabaßarāš* R115 (*-βa-* supra linea); *bēṅ* *arāš* G118.  
 116 *sraēšta* G72, T49, G12; *srēšta* P13, X892.5Av3 I 2; *sarista* K12; *sraēštāe* E1, G13; *sarāšta* G118.  
 117 *yasta* F1, F4, G72, G63, P13, T49, R115, X892.5Av3 I 2; *ayasta* G118 (*a-* del.).  
 118 *gaōnōtāma* F1; *gaonōtāma* F4, G72; *gaōnōtām* K12; *yaštagaonō.tāma* E1, G13; *gaonō.tām* R115; *gaonotām* G118; *yaštagaonōtāma* G12.  
 119 *baßariš* K12; *baßarāš* T49, G118; *abavarāš* R115 (*sraēšta* add. et del.).  
 120 *bauuāiti* P13, R115  
 121 Geldner 1886–1896, 2.101 already noticed that *baßriš*. *bauuaiti*. *upāpō* is an Avestan gloss.  
 122 *yaṭakərətəm* R115  
 123 *ṅbaštāi* G63, P13, T49, X892.5Av3 I 2; *ṅbaßarastāi* K12; *ṅbarašta* E1, G13, G12; *ṅbaštāiš* R115; *ṅbarštāi* G118  
 124 *zarūne* P13, T49; *zarūna* K12; *zrūnē* E1, G13; *zarūnē* R115  
 125 *caramā* F1, F4, G72, G63, T49, E1, R115, G13, G118, X892.5Av3 I 2; *caramā* P13 (sec. *-ə-* del.); *caramā* K12; *tarāmā* G12

*vaēnaṇtō*.<sup>126</sup> *brāzəṇta*.<sup>127</sup> *frāna*.<sup>128</sup> *ərəzatəm*.<sup>129</sup> *zaranim*.<sup>130</sup>

She is clothed with beaver clothes, Arəduuī Sūrā Anāhitā, (with the fur) of thirty beavers that bear four (young ones), for it is the most beautiful she-beaver, insofar as it is the most hairy [the she-beaver is an aquatic (animal); when torn at the right time the skin(s) shine to the beholders in full silver (and) gold.]

According to these passages, the goddess wears shoes with golden shoelaces, a golden mouth-veil, a golden woollen cloak, squared earrings, a golden necklace, a crown and beaver clothes. Such a vivid description of the goddess' attire led most scholars who studied this hymn to suppose that its composer was actually describing a statue of Anāhitā. If this was true and a statue of this goddess actually ever existed, it would contradict the testimony of Herodotus 1.131,<sup>131</sup> according to whom Persians did not have statues of their gods:

Πέρσας δὲ οἶδα νόμοισι τοιοῖσιδε χρεωμένους, ἀγάλματα μὲν καὶ νηοὺς καὶ βωμοὺς οὐκ ἐν νόμῳ ποιευμένους ἰδρύεσθαι, ἀλλὰ καὶ τοῖσι ποιεῦσι μωρίην ἐπιφέρουσι, ὥς μὲν ἐμοὶ δοκέειν, ὅτι οὐκ ἀνθρωποφυέας ἐνόμισαν τοὺς θεοὺς κατὰ περ οἱ Ἕλληνες εἶναι

As to the customs of the Persians, I know them to be these. It is not their custom to make and set up statues and temples and altars, but those who make such they deem them foolish, as I suppose, because they never believed the gods, as do the Greeks, to be in the likeness of men.

Although this might certainly have been the case during Herodotus' time, most scholars, on the basis of a quotation of Berossus, *apud* Clemens Alexandrinus, *Protrepticus* 5.63.3, according to which Artaxerxes II (BCE 404–359) was the first to erect statues of Anāhitā in several parts of his empire, thought that the worship of statues of this goddess became a common phenomenon at a certain point in later Persian customs.<sup>132</sup>

- 126 *vaenāntō* G72, T49; *vaināntō* G63; *vanaṇtō* K12, G118; *vaēnām.tō* E1, G13, G12  
 127 *brāzəṇta* G63, X892.5Av3 I 2; *brāzəṇtō* P13; *brāzəṇti* K12, G12; *brāzəṇti* E1, T49, G13; *brāzəṇtō* R115; *brājiṇtē* G118  
 128 *frānā* G63, G13; *frata* K12; *frānē* E1; *frāne* G118  
 129 *airiziti* K12; *rəzatəm* X892.5Av3 I 2  
 130 *zaraim* G63, P13, R115, X892.5Av3 I 2; *zaranām* K12, E1, G12; *zaraninām* T49; *zaranaēm* G13; *zaranainām* G118  
 131 Greek text and English translation in Godley 1920, 170–171.  
 132 Greek text and English translation in Butterworth 1919, 146–149.

μετὰ πολλὰς μέντοι ὕστερον περιόδους ἐτῶν ἀνθρωποειδῇ ἀγάλματα σέβειν αὐτοὺς Βήρωστος ἐν τρίτῃ Χαλδαϊκῶν παρίστησι, τοῦτο Ἀρταξέρξου τοῦ Δαρείου τοῦ Ὁχοῦ εἰσηγησαμένου, ὃς πρῶτος τῆς Ἀφροδίτης Ἀναΐτιδος τὸ ἄγαλμα ἀναστήσας ἐν Βαβυλῶνι καὶ Σούσοις καὶ Ἐκβατάνοις Πέρσαις καὶ Βάκτροις καὶ Δαμασκῷ καὶ Σάρδεσιν ὑπέδειξε σέβειν. It was not, however, till many ages had passed that they began to worship statues in human form, as Berossus shows in the third book of his *Chaldaics*; for this custom was introduced by Artaxerxes, the son of Darius of Ochus, who first set up the statue of Aphrodite Ἀναΐτις in Babylon, Susa and Ecbatana, and enjoined this worship upon Persians and Bactrians, upon Damascus and Sardis.

Doubtless the goddess Anāhitā acquired more importance during the reign of Artaxerxes II, when she was mentioned for the first and only time in three of his inscriptions, concretely in A<sup>2</sup>Sa 4–5, A<sup>2</sup>Sd 3–4 and A<sup>2</sup>Ha 5–7.<sup>133</sup>

A<sup>2</sup>Sa 4–5

4. *vašnā : AM : Anahita : utā : Miθra : imam : apadāna(m) : adam : akunām : AM : A*

5. *nahita : utā : Miθra : mām : pātu : hacā : vispā : gastā : utā : imām : t(a)ya : akunām : mā : vijanāti : mā : vinā 9ayāti :*

4. By the favor of A(h)uramazdā, Anāhitā and Miθra I built this palace. May A(h)uramazdā,

5. Anāhitā and Miθra protect me from all evil, and that which I have built may they neither shatter nor harm.

A<sup>2</sup>Sd 3–4

3. *vašnā : AMhā : imām : hadiš : t(a)ya : jivādi : paradayadām : adam : akunavām : AM :*

Anah

4. *ita : utā : Miθra : mām : pātu : hacā : vispā : gastā : (...)*

3. By the favor of A(h)uramazdā this is the palace which I built in my lifetime as a pleasant retreat. May A(h)uramazdā,

4. Anāhitā and Miθra protect me from all evil (...)

A<sup>2</sup>Ha 5–7

5. *(...) imam : apadāna(m) : vašnā : AM : Anahita : utā : Miθra : adam : akun*

6. *ām : AM : Anahita : utā : Miθra : mām : pātu : hacā : vispā : gastā : ut*

7. *ā : imām : t(a)ya : akunā(m) : mā : vijanāti : mā : vinā9ayāti :*

5. This palace by the favor of A(h)uramazdā, Anāhitā and Miθra I built.

6. May A(h)uramazdā, Anāhitā and Miθra protect me from all evil,

7. and that which I have built may they neither shatter nor harm.

As we see, Anāhitā is the only female deity that appears together with Ahura Mazdā and Miθra in these three inscriptions in a sort of triadic formula. However, insofar as no statues of her are mentioned in the royal inscriptions, we must be very cautious as regards the possibility of a statue-worship of this goddess during the rule of Artaxerxes II. In fact, neither the other extant Achaemenid primary sources nor the archaeological or iconographic evidence of that period corroborate the existence of such statues, so the only basis to support it would be Berossus' quotation, which is problematic enough.

The connection between the possible visual representation of Zoroastrian divinities in antiquity and their descriptions in the extant written sources is a problem that cannot be easily solved, and that often enters the domain of pure speculation. As far as the image of Anāhitā is concerned, most scholars agree on the fact that she is depicted in the Sasanian reliefs of Naqš-e Rostam and Tāq-e Bostān, but disagree with regards to other alleged visual representations of the goddess. It is surely obvious that there is a general tendency to uncritically identify Anāhitā with every female figure found in reliefs, on coins and vessels, *etc.* in the Iranian milieu as well as every single mention of an Iranian female deity in other ancient literatures, regardless of her name in the original sources. This problem also affected the interpretation of Berossus' reference to a supposed Aphrodite Anaitis and its identification with Anāhitā. Windischmann had already emphasised that the Greek name Ἀναΐτιδος in Berossus' text is not attested as such in any manuscript, but that it was just an emendation already proposed by Bochart instead of the attested name Ταῤῥίδος.<sup>134</sup> Nevertheless, most scholars were not aware of this emendation and took it as the written evidence itself, a mistake that continued to be made for more than 150 years. In any case, even if Bochart's emendation Ἀναΐτιδος for the attested Ταῤῥίδος were correct, and personally I do not think it is, it is evident that an emendation of a third source, quoted by a secondary source, cannot alone constitute the basis on which the hypothesis of the existence of a statue-worship of the goddess Anāhitā during the reign of Artaxerxes II rests. Moreover, even in the extremely hypothetical case that statues of this goddess ever existed at that time, there is no solid argument to establish that the *Yašt* 5 dedicated to this goddess described any of such hypothetical statues. Unfortunately, most scholars have not been that cautious

<sup>133</sup> Old Persian text and English translation in Kent 1950, 154–155.

<sup>134</sup> Windischmann 1856, 88; Bochart 1646, 277.

and merged Berossus' quotation (in fact, Bochart's emendation) with the description of the goddess taken from the passages of Yašt 5 mentioned above, taking for granted that this Avestan hymn described the dress and ornaments of the statue of the goddess, and even dating the composition of this hymn to the time of Artaxerxes II.<sup>135</sup> In this regard, I totally agree with Kellens, in whose opinion the hypothesis that this hymn contained a description of the statue of the goddess is "indémonstrable."<sup>136</sup>

The excessive interest in demonstrating the existence of this statue has obscured other relevant details of the description of Anāhitā's attire for decades, one of them being the fact that she wears beaver fur: on the one hand, the mention of this animal, the habitat of which was not very extensive in Central Asia, might help us determine where the Yašt 5 was composed. On the other hand, the fact that the Zoroastrian goddess of the waters wore beaver fur requires an explanation in the context of the Zoroastrian regulations concerning the protection of dogs and dog-like animals, one of which was the beaver.

The habitat of the beaver in Central Asia can be traced archaeologically in the Bronze Age in the milieu of the Andronovo culture, in whose settlements beaver bones were found, concretely in the Urals (Kipel', Novo-Burino), on the Tobol (Aleksievka), on the Ob, and in central (Shortandy-Bulak) and eastern Kazakhstan (Ust'-Naryn, Malokrasnoyarka, Trushnikovo), Kazakhstan being the southernmost border where this animal lived in ancient times.<sup>137</sup> This is extremely important in order to locate the composition of the Yašt 5, in which the goddess Anāhitā appears dressed in beaver fur, because it is very likely that the Avestan hymn had its origin in one of these places, as Kuz'mina has already pointed out.<sup>138</sup>

The use of beaver fur among Iranian tribes of Central Asia, like the Scythian Budini, is reported in later times by Herodotus 4.109.2:<sup>139</sup>

ἡ δὲ χώρα σφέων πᾶσα ἐστὶ δασέα ἰδησι παντοίησι: ἐν δὲ τῇ ἰδῇ τῇ πλείστη ἐστὶ λίμνη μεγάλη τε καὶ πολλή καὶ ἔλος καὶ κάλαμος περὶ αὐτήν. ἐν δὲ ταύτῃ ἐνύδριες ἀλίσκονται καὶ κάστορες καὶ ἄλλα θηρία τετραγωνοπρόσωπα, τῶν τὰ δέρματα παρὰ τὰς σισύρνas παραρράπτεται, καὶ οἱ ὄρχιες αὐτοῖσι εἰσὶ χρήσιμοι ἐς ὑστερέων ἄκεσιν.

Their whole country is thickly wooded with every kind of tree; in the depth of the forest there is a great and wide lake and a marsh surrounded by reeds; otters are trapped in it, and beavers, and certain square-faced animals whose skins serve for trimming mantles, and their testicles are used by the people to heal sicknesses of the womb.

That people in Central Asia used beaver fur is clear. However, it is not that clear whether or not those people might have been Zoroastrians, insofar as it was strictly prohibited for them to kill beavers and otters, classified by Zoroastrians as among the dog species, as we see in the Pahlavi text of the *Great Bundahišn* 13.18:<sup>140</sup>

šašom sag dah sardag pasušorw [ī ast šubān] ud wišorw [ī ast mānbān] ud wohunazg [ī ast ramīg] ud tarunag<sup>141</sup> ud babrag ī ābīg [kē sag ī ābīg xwānēnd] ud rōbāh ud raspūg<sup>142</sup> [kē rasūg xwānēnd] ud zūzag<sup>143</sup> ud udrag ud muškān <ī> parrān<sup>144</sup> kē az awēšān dō sardag 'sūrag-hammōzišn<sup>145</sup> cīyōn rōbāh ud raspūg<sup>146</sup> ud 'wēšag-hammōzišn<sup>147</sup> cīyōn udrag ud kē xār pad pušt dārēd ud zūzag

Sixth, the dog has ten species: the sheepdog [which is the shepherd], the house dog [which is the watch-dog], the bloodhound [which is gregarious], the young one, the aquatic beaver [which they call aquatic dog], the fox, the weasel [which they call *rasūg*], the hedgehog, the otter and the bats, of which there are two species, (namely, those that) use (to live) in burrows, such as the fox and the weasel, and (those that) use (to live) in the woods, such as the otter, the (animal) which has spines on its back and the hedgehog.

Beavers and otters were considered dogs by Zoroastrians. Dogs were, and still are, present in Zoroastrian purification and apotropaic ceremonies, like the *sag-dīd*, "seen by the

135 Windischmann's supposition 1856, 118–119 was followed by Darmesteter 1892–1893, 2.364–366, Clemen 1920, 98, Lommel 1927, 31, Nyberg 1938, 261, Wikander 1946, 61–65, Herzfeld 1947, 520, Willman–Grabowska 1953, 269, Ringbom 1957, 5–6, Hauschild 1965, 31–32, Boyce 1975, 96, 98, Hinz 1979, 183, Schmeja 1986, 213, Boyce 1988, 279–280, Panaino 2000, 37 and Riel 2002, 198–199. Gray 1930, 57 neither confirmed nor denied it and only de Jong 1997, 272 and Jacobs 2001, 89 clearly denied it. See also Brosius' 1998, 238 statement: "After all, we have to bear in mind that we have no convincing representations of Anahita for that period."

136 Kellens 2002–2003, 320.

137 Kuz'mina 2007, 101, 174–175, with further bibliography.

138 Kuz'mina 2007, 175.

139 Greek text and English translation in Godley 1928, 308–309.

140 Pahlavi text and English translation in Anklesaria 1956, 120–121. Critical edition of the Pahlavi text in Pakzad 2005, 172–173.

141 tlnk TD1, TD2. Pakzad 2005, 172–173 read *tōrag*.

142 Pakzad 2005, 172–173 read *rasbūg*.

143 zwn'k TD1, TD2.

144 Pakzad 2005, 172–173 read *mušk-pad-rān*.

145 swlk hmwhtšn' TD1, TD2.

146 Pakzad 2005, 172–173 read *rasbūg*.

147 wyšk hmwhtšn' TD1, TD2.

dog,” in which this animal drives the *nasu*— out, that is, the corpse’s demon causing the most extreme impurity. Dogs also had a special religious significance in Zoroastrianism that justified their protection. Indeed, from different Avestan and Pahlavi sources we know that it was a great sin to kill a dog, but it was even worse to kill dog-like animals living in the water, like beavers and otters, as is manifest in chapter 14 of the *Vīdēvdād*,<sup>148</sup> one of the most relevant codes of the Zoroastrian literature:

14.1. Avestan |a| *pərəsaṭ. zaraθuštrō. ahurəm. mazdqm. ahura. mazda. mainiiō. spəništa. dātara. gaēθanqm. astuuaitinqm. ašaum.* |b| *yō. udrəm. jaiṇti. yim. upāpəm. [\*hazaṇrā.sūnīs. \*strī.nāmanō. <hazaṇrā.sūnīs. nairiiō.nāmanō.>] frazābaoḍaṇhəm. snaθəm. vīkərəṭ. uštānəm.* |c| *kā. hē. asti. ciṇa.*

|a| Zaraθuštra asked Ahura Mazdā: “Ahura Mazdā, most beneficent Spirit, Maker of the material creatures, Righteous, |b| whoever strikes an aquatic otter [having a thousand dogs of feminine names <, having a thousand dogs of masculine names>] a blow by which consciousness goes away, cutting its life off, |c| what is the atonement for him?”

Pahlavi |a| *pursīd zarduxšt az ohrmazd kū ohrmazd mēnōg abzōnīg dādār ī gēhān ī astōmandān ī ahlaw* [ay ohrmazd dādār ahlaw pad xwānišn ud abārīg pad stāyišn] |b| *kē udrag zanēd ī ābīg [kē] az hazār sag <ī> mādag nām ud az hazār sag <ī> nar nām* [bawēd pad ān ī] frāz az bōy snah jūd kīrrēnīd gyān |c| *kadār \*ōy ast tōzišn*

|a| Zarduxšt asked Ohrmazd: “Ohrmazd, bountiful Spirit, Maker of the material creatures, Righteous [that is, “Ohrmazd, Maker, Righteous” (is said) in the invocation and the rest in the praise], whoever strikes an aquatic otter [which comes from a thousand dogs of feminine names and from a thousand dogs of masculine names by] a blow by which consciousness goes away, cutting its life off, |c| what is the atonement for him?”

14.2. Avestan |a| *āq. mraoṭ. ahurō. mazdā. baēuuarə. upāzananqm. upāzōiṭ. aspahe. aštraia. baēuuarə. \*sraošō.caranaiia. |b| baēuuarə. vaziiāqm. aēsmanqm. xraoždūanqm. \*hušatqm. \*pairīštanqm. āḍre. ahurahe. mazdā. ašaiia. vaṇhuiia. urune. ciṇīm. nisrinuiiāt.*

|a| And Ahura Mazdā said: “ten thousand lashes with the horse’s whip one must decree (for him), ten thousand with the Sraoša’s lash. |b| Ten thousand faggots of hard, dried, selected wood he must pile up for the fire of Ahura Mazdā according to the good Righteousness as atonement for his soul.”

Pahlavi |a| *u-š guft ohrmazd kū bēwar pad abar zanišnīh abar zanišn asp aštar bēwar srōšōčarnām* [sad haftād tanāpuhl ay padīš tuwānīgīh ēdōn wizārišn cīyōn az abastāg gōwēd pad atuwānīgīh ka hamāg yazišn kunad šāyēd ka dwāzdahomāst bē kunēnd ā-z šāyēd] |b| *bēwar puštag <ī> ēzm ī saxt ī hušk <ī> pad [rōšnīh] nigerīd ō ātaxš ī ohrmazd pad ahlāyīh ī weh ruwān pad tōzišn bē ē abespārēd* |a| And Ohrmazd said: “one must beat him with ten thousand lashes of the horse’s whip, ten thousand of the Sraoša’s lash [one hundred seventy *tanāpuhl* sins, that is, (in case of) possibility one has to redeem for it so as it is said from the Avesta; in case of impossibility, if one performs a complete Yasna, it is allowed; if they perform the *dwāzdahomāst* ceremony, then it is allowed too]. |b| Ten thousand faggots of hard, dry, exposed wood [to light] he must consign for the fire of Ohrmazd according to the good Righteousness as atonement for his soul.” 14.3–18. (...)

Killing beavers and otters was even worse than killing another type of dog, probably because another grave sin was added to this: the sin of staining the waters, also extremely sacred for Zoroastrians. The fact that these animals are killed in the water is highlighted in the Pahlavi text of the *Ardā Wīrāz Nāmag* 98.1–3 with regards to the punishment in hell for those who killed beavers in water:<sup>149</sup>

98.1. *ēg-im dīd ruwān ī zan-ēw ud mard-ēw kē abar rīd ud bē xward*

98.2. *u-m pursīd kū ēn tanān cē wināh kard kē ruwān ōwōn garān pādīfrāh barēd*

98.3. *gōwēd srōš-ahlaw ud ādur-yazd kū ēn ruwān ī awēšān druwand mard ud zan kē-šān pad gēṭīy nasā pad wināhgārīh jūd ud babrag ī ābīg andar āb ōzad ud abārīg dām ī ohrmazd zad ud ōzad*

98.1. Then I saw the soul of a woman and of a man who defecated and ate it.

98.2. And I asked: “What sin did these persons commit whose souls undergo such a severe punishment?”

98.3. The Righteous Srōš and the god Ādur said: “These are the souls of those wicked men and women who in the material world devoured corpses through sinfulness, and killed the aquatic beaver in the water, and smote and killed other creatures of Ohrmazd.”

The prohibition of killing beavers and otters was still in effect in later normative texts of the Pahlavi literature, as attested in the list of the worst sins in *Dēnkard* 5.9.11.<sup>150</sup>

148 Resumed in *Dēnkard* 8.44.56 [M 782.9–10; K43b 129.1–2]: *abar garān wināhīh ī ōzadan ī babrag ī ābīg ud gōkān ī tōzišn* “About the grievous sin of killing an aquatic beaver and the details of its atonement.”

149 53.11–17 in Vahman’s 1986, 180–181, 217 critical edition with English translation.

150 Critical edition and French translation in Amouzgar and Tafazzoli 2000, 44–45.



(...) *ud babrag ud hāmist sag sarādag ōzadan* (...)  
 (...) And to kill a beaver and every dog-like (animal)  
 (...)

Similarly, we read in the *Pahlavi Rivāyat accompanying the Dādestān ī dēnīg* 21b6:<sup>151</sup>

*kē babrag-ē ābīg bē ōzanēd ā-š sad ud panjāh tanāpuhl wināh*  
 Whoever kills a water beaver, there is for him a 150  
*tanāpuhl* sin.

This finds confirmation also in later Zoroastrian New Persian texts, like the *Saddar Nasr* 86:<sup>152</sup>

1. *in-ke sag-e ābi na-šāyad koštan o agar jāy-i be binand bar bāyad gereftan o b-āb-e rawān bordan*  
 2. *ce dar zand-e ĵud-div-dād ān-rā gunāh 'azim farmude ast o har kasi ke sag-e ābi be-košad toxm-dāneš na-mānad*

1. That is, it is not allowed to kill a beaver (lit. "water dog") and, if they see it in any place, it is necessary to take it and bring it to the water of a river,  
 2. for in the commentary of the Ĵud-div-dād it is decreed as a great sin, and for everyone who kills a beaver (lit. "water dog") the container of his seed does not remain.

Although otters (Avestan *udra*–, Pahlavi *udrag*) and beavers (Avestan *baβri*–, Pahlavi *babrag*) are not exactly the same, we have no reason to suppose that Zoroastrians strictly prohibited killing the former but permitted the killing of the latter. Otherwise we would expect that the Pahlavi texts, which reveal that this ancient prohibition was still in force when they were composed, only mentioned otters (Pahlavi *udrag*) but not beavers (Pahlavi *babrag*). Therefore, we have to suppose that, at least from the time when the *Vīdēvdād* 14 was composed, it was permitted neither to kill otters nor beavers. In such case, we must try to explain the contradiction existing between this and the fact that the goddess of the waters Arəduuī Sūrā Anāhitā wears beaver fur.

One way to explain this contradiction might be by proposing that the *Yašt* 5 was composed earlier than the *Vīdēvdād* 14 and accordingly was not bound by the prescriptions of the latter. In fact, scholars such as Lommel thought that this *Yašt* contained pre-Zoroastrian material that was in conflict with Zoroaster's teaching, and even that

Anāhitā was a pre-Zoroastrian goddess.<sup>153</sup> However, there is no argument to linguistically demonstrate that the Avestan text of *Yašt* 5 is older than that of *Vīdēvdād* 14, because both were composed, or at least transmitted, in Young Avestan. We might also think that these texts were not composed in the same place. Nevertheless, the broad geographical region of Central Asia which constitutes the habitat of the beaver would be valid for both texts, but we cannot go further when trying to specify where concretely they were composed within this broad geographical area. Leaving aside whether or not they were composed at a different time or in different places, in my opinion it is more likely they are the work of poets of different Zoroastrian communities who shared the same language, but were not necessarily bound by the same laws. Prescriptions were interpreted and reinterpreted by local religious authorities sometimes in a different way, as we know especially from the commentaries on the Pahlavi translations of Avestan texts, and there was enough room in them for divergent views.<sup>154</sup>

Zoroastrianism was not a monolithic religion canonized by a unique authority. Insofar as it is evident that Zoroastrian authorities of later periods did not share the same opinion about several very specific regulations, I wonder why we should suppose that it was otherwise in earlier times. Thus, I think that we must rather accept that different regulations existed among the Zoroastrian communities and that the same regulations were differently interpreted. Using this approach, we will gain, in my opinion, a more precise understanding of the Zoroastrian regulations and will avoid the temptation to reconstruct a monolithic, canonized and coherent ancient Zoroastrianism that probably never existed as such.

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<sup>151</sup> Critical edition of the Pahlavi text and English translation in Williams 1990, 1.115, 2.46.

<sup>152</sup> English translation in West 1885, 350. Edition of the New Persian text in Dhabhar 1909, 61. Also according to *MU* 1.299.4–12, 1.300.3–16, 1.305.1–309.12, 1.307.2–13 it is not allowed to kill a beaver, and whoever does it commits a *margarzān* sin.

<sup>153</sup> Lommel 1927, 27.

<sup>154</sup> See for instance *Nāmāgīhā ī Manušcihr* 1.10.7 (West 1882, 3.350): "On account of the depth and much intricacy of the religion they mention many opinions and well-considered decrees which were likewise formed devoid of uniformity, and the utterance of the different opinions of the priests is with the reciters of the Nasks; but even among themselves the most supremely just high-priests were of a different opinion, different judgement, different teaching, different interpretation, and different practice only in the peace, mutual friendship, and affection which they had together."

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## Modes of textile production in cultic contexts in the Iron Age Southern Levant: The finds from Tell eṣ-Şâfi/Gath

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One of the most intriguing topics at the heart of ancient textile research is the association between textiles and cult. Fabrics apparently played a fundamental role in cultic activities from the earliest concurrence of textile production and cultic activity. Early documented evidence of this association is represented by texts describing the production and preparation of cloth for religious use as offerings, as attire for the deities, as furniture or decoration in the sanctuaries, and as priestly vestments. Consequently, the necessity for cloth in ceremonial rites generated the establishment of textile workshops within cultic compounds. The archaeological evidence for this connection is difficult to trace, as the actual textiles have not survived. In their absence, we must rely on the discovery of textile production tools that have endured, specifically clusters of loom weights representing weaving activities, in juxtaposition to cultic artifacts and architecture. Part of the wider phenomenon of artisan ateliers affiliated with religious centers, the association of textile production with cultic activities is attested throughout the ancient

Near East, as corroborated by both archaeological finds and written sources.<sup>2</sup> Despite the prevalence of weaving implements, particularly loom weights, found together with artifacts associated with cultic activity, limited research has been conducted on the implications of these conjoined finds. This study investigates the exceptional quantity of loom weights associated with cultic elements found in various archaeological contexts at Tell eṣ-Şâfi/Gath which demonstrate the diversity of cultic contexts associated with weaving.

### Workshop Identification

Recognising production models in the archaeological record begins with the identification of the workshops themselves.<sup>3</sup> For craft production, an artisan essentially requires a space in which to work and a “tool kit” or “tools-of-the-trade”, elements that should be fairly simple to identify in the archaeological record.<sup>4</sup> However, although a workshop might circumscribe a specific physical area, the architectural space required does not necessarily need be unique.<sup>5</sup> In a household or cottage industry,<sup>6</sup> for example, the workspace may be located in a designated room, on a rooftop, or in a multi-purpose area such as an open courtyard, in which food

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2 Michel and Nosch 2010; Nosch, Koefoed and Andersson Strand 2013; Andersson Strand and Nosch 2015.

3 Evelyn 1988; Tournavistou 1988; Hitchcock 2000, 129–132.

4 Evelyn 1988; Tournavistou 1988.

5 Evelyn 1988, 402; Tournavistou 1988, 448.

6 In which case, the products would be used for domestic consumption, as well as for surplus income.

preparation and cooking activities were also conducted.<sup>7</sup> In a larger industry, for centralised production, while architectural elements could be indicative of a workshop, this would depend upon the craft itself.<sup>8</sup> In light of the ambiguity of workshop architecture, the primary criterion for the identification of craft production would be its typical implements, the “tool kit”.<sup>9</sup> Thus, recognising the associated production elements would allow for identification of the craft, which, in turn, would influence the interpretation of the physical space in which they were found.

In addition to identifying the workspace and associated tools, supplementary objects can also indicate the presence of a workshop, depending on the nature of the craft. These include pre-production raw materials, quantities of finished products or in various stages of production, wasters (*i.e.* products unsuitable for distribution), and by-products, such as slag deposits. Such evidence for textile production, however, due to the organic nature of the product and many of the distinguishable tools such as wooden spindles and loom frames disintegrates over time stone, bone, and glass spindle whorls and clay or stone loom weights are frequently found in excavations.<sup>10</sup> Since spindles are transportable, although they clearly indicate spinning their presence may not necessarily indicate where the spinning was performed. Loom weights representing the warp-weighted loom, however, have been excavated at sites throughout the southern Levant in contexts dating from the Iron Age through the Early Roman period (12th century BCE through the 1st century CE), and these finds can contribute to the identification of weaving workplaces.<sup>11</sup>

### Weaving and temples

It is not uncommon to find a workshop or workshops adjacent to a temple or within a temple complex.<sup>12</sup> Given that cloth was consumed in ritual contexts – as priestly vestments, wall-hangings and floor carpets for decorating sacred space, and principally as garments for “dressing the gods” – we can expect textile workshops to be located in the vicinity of temples in which divine images were housed. Written evidence for religious ceremonies incorporating elaborate clothing for the deities has been found throughout

the ancient Near East and the Aegean.<sup>13</sup> Administrative dockets, such as the ones associated with the Ebaddar temple at Sippar written in Akkadian, detail ordering, tailoring, and repairing garments for each of the different gods in the pantheon, along with descriptions of rituals held at different times of the year.<sup>14</sup> Notably, similar festivals and processions are described, in Linear B inscriptions as taking place in the Mycenaean cult.<sup>15</sup> These ritual processions incorporated drinking and feasting, and culminated in dressing the divine images in richly decorated garments.<sup>16</sup>

The Old Testament text mentions that at the time of the Judean King Josiah, women were weaving for Asherah in the Temple (II Kings 23:7). The fascinating topic of Asherah’s presence and role in the religious realm of the southern Levant has been dealt with extensively; pertinent to this study is the association of weaving with the Temple in Jerusalem in a Judahite context.<sup>17</sup> Furthermore, the language and the context of the cleansing of the Temple under Josiah give the impression that this was a common activity in the region, probably adopted through interactions with neighboring pagan cultures.

Temples are usually identified by an architectural plan that sets them apart from the other non-religious buildings at a site.<sup>18</sup> They generally have a specific orientation and/or a series of halls or rooms. The space is organised to focus on the deity or deities, usually directed toward an *adytum* or inner *sanctum*. Temples are constructed more elaborately with finer building materials than other structures. They also generally contain special architectural features and installations such as pillars, benches, hearths, basins for libations, and altars. Pottery finds include vessels for beverages, food offerings and libations *e.g.* *kernoi* or *rhytae*, incense stands, chalices, and figurines.<sup>19</sup> While cultural influences determine various differences in the makeup of a temple, these elements are indicative of temple contexts.

As the focal point for public interaction with the deities, temples are not the only loci of cultic contexts in antiquity. Distinctly cultic elements, such as altars and *bamot* (raised platforms used for rituals), have been found in open-aided

7 Daviau 1993; Cassuto 2008.

8 For example, as in the use of specified crushing surfaces for olives in the initial stage of oil production.

9 Just like a potter’s wheel would indicate a pottery workshop.

10 Other tools in the textile production “kit” such as ceramic spinning bowls are less common see Dothan 1963.

11 Barber 1991; Shamir 1996.

12 For Tel Dan, see Stager and Wolff 1981; for Kition, see Smith 2009, 34–43, 53–54, 55–56, 58, 65; Smith 2002, 299–300.

13 For the Near East see Linssen 2004; Zawadzki 2006; and for the Linear B Aegean texts see Nosch and Perna 2001; Gulizio 2012.

14 Zawadzki 2006.

15 Gulizio 2012.

16 See Barber 1992 for an overview of the preparation of the *peplos* for Athena and the accompanying ceremony in Classical Greece.

17 See Ackerman 2008 for a discussion of the relationship between Asherah and textile production in the southern Levant.

18 See Wightman 2007 for an overview of temple architecture.

19 Wightman 2007, 901.



contexts; likewise, distinctly cultic objects have been found in both domestic and, as discussed below, industrial settings.<sup>20</sup>

### Weaving and cultic contexts in the Southern Levant

By the Iron Age II (10th–6th centuries BCE), the association of textile production and cult was prevalent throughout the southern Levant. At Kuntillet 'Ajrud for example loom weights and ostraca with “Yahweh of Samaria and his Asherah” and “Yahweh of Teman and his Asherah,” as well as *shaatnez* (a cloth of both linen and wool worn only by the high priests), were found in the same building complex.<sup>21</sup> At Tell Taannek,<sup>22</sup> Tell Deir 'Alla,<sup>23</sup> and Khirbet al-Mudayna,<sup>24</sup> loom weight clusters, indicating weaving, were found in association cultic structures as well.

It is not uncommon to find various types of workshops in the vicinity of temple complexes in the southern Levant, such as the evidence for metallurgy activity in the courtyard preceding the temple at Nahariyah<sup>25</sup> and the potter's wheels and the kilns found in the courtyards of two temples at Hazor<sup>26</sup> and at Arad.<sup>27</sup> Figurine molds were found at Tell Taannek,<sup>28</sup> and archaeological evidence for oil production in the temple courtyard at Tel Dan.<sup>29</sup>

### Loom weight contexts at Tell eṣ-Şâfi/Gath

Evidence for weaving has been found alongside evidence for cultic activities in different areas and strata at Tell eṣ-Şâfi/Gath (Fig 17.1). The analysis of these finds provides the foundation for demonstrating different modes of production associated with religious activities.

Tell eṣ-Şâfi/Gath located in the southern coastal plain, known as the Shephelah, is a multi-period site identified in the Iron Age as the Philistine city of Gath, one of the five cities that made up the Philistine Pentapolis. The material culture at the site from the Iron Age I, reflects a foreign element, and based on parallel phenomena at Ashkelon,<sup>30</sup>



Figure 17.1. Regional Map of Iron Age II sites with Tell eṣ-Şâfi/Gath. Illustration: J. Rosenberg

Ashdod,<sup>31</sup> and Tel Mique/Ekron,<sup>32</sup> it is associated with the Philistines, one of the tribes of the Sea Peoples that settled in the southern Levant at the time.<sup>33</sup> Once thought to be solely Aegean oriented, it is now believed that the Philistines were an eclectic group of people who came together and mixed with the local Canaanites simultaneously preserving their own material culture, customs which exhibit strong western influences.<sup>34</sup> Over time, Philistine material culture went through several stages as observed in the development of their pottery typology and wares.<sup>35</sup> The Philistines similarly brought textile production traditions from their place of origin, attested by the finds of spool/reel-shaped

<sup>20</sup> Schmitt 2014.

<sup>21</sup> Sheffer and Tidhar 2012, 289, 308; Shamir this volume.

<sup>22</sup> Frick 2000, 131–132; Friend 1998.

<sup>23</sup> Boertien 2008.

<sup>24</sup> Boertien 2014.

<sup>25</sup> Dothan 1956.

<sup>26</sup> Yadin *et al.* 1972; Yadin *et al.* 1975.

<sup>27</sup> Aharoni 1968.

<sup>28</sup> Lapp 1967.

<sup>29</sup> Stager and Wolff, 1981. At Kition, see Smith 2009, 34–43, 53–54, 55–56, 58, 65; Smith 2002, 299–300.

<sup>30</sup> Stager 1991, 15; Stager 1995, 346; Dothan 1998, 154–155; Rahmstorf 2005.

<sup>31</sup> Dothan and Ben Shlomo 2005.

<sup>32</sup> Meehl, Dothan and Gitin 2006.

<sup>33</sup> Maeir 2012a, 19–22.

<sup>34</sup> Hitchcock and Maeir 2013.

<sup>35</sup> For a comprehensive overview of the arrival of the Philistines and their distinctive material culture, see Maeir 2012a, 19–22, with references.

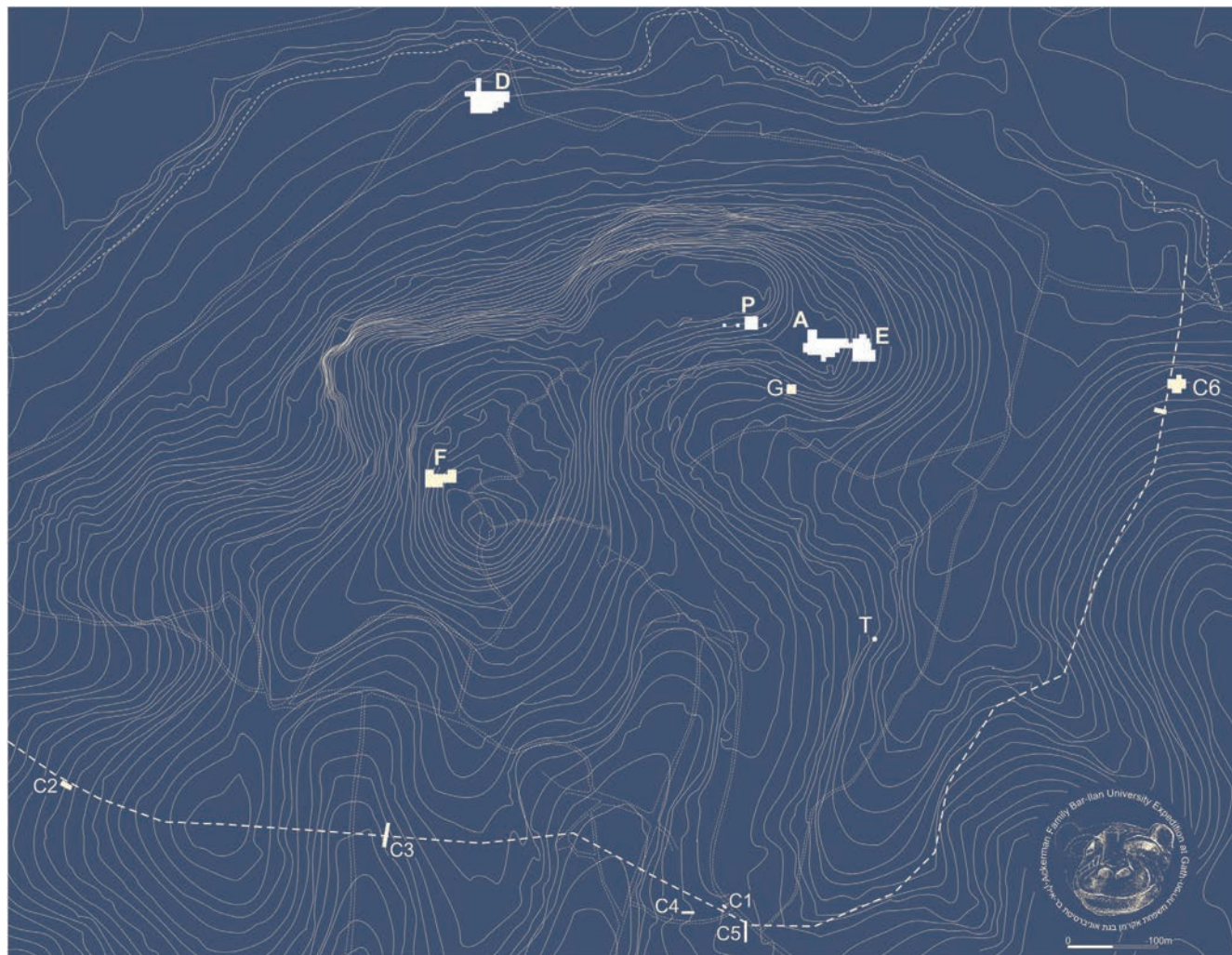


Figure 17.2. Topographical Map of Tell eṣ-Ṣâfi/Gath with areas excavated. Illustration: J. Rosenberg

loom weights in early Iron Age I contexts. These represent evidence for the reintroduction of the warp-weighted loom to the region.<sup>36</sup>

The excavations carried out at Tell eṣ-Ṣâfi/Gath have revealed a large prosperous Iron Age II city, encompassing 40–50 hectares (Fig. 17.2).<sup>37</sup> The profusion of loom weight clusters found in several of the excavated areas provides a unique opportunity to examine textile production in different architectural contexts.<sup>38</sup>

36 Curiously, while loom weights are found in Middle Bronze Age contexts, they are absent in the Late Bronze Age, and their reappearance in the early Iron Age coincides with the arrival of the Sea People tribes. For discussion of this phenomenon see Barber 1991, 299–303; Shamir 1996, 140; Yasur-Landau 2007, 509; Uziel 2011.

37 Maeir 2012a.

38 Cassuto 2012.

Although there is less evidence for the early Iron Age I occupation at the site, indicating a smaller city at this time, excavations in Area A Stratum A5, exposed a temple structure dating from the 11th century to the end of the 10th century BCE.<sup>39</sup> This rectangular building containing two round pillar bases is similar to the Tel Qasile, Stratum X temple.

Two small rooms were found just north of the temple, dating to Stratum A4 of the 10th century BCE (Fig. 17.3). The eastern room served as a small metallurgy workshop in which both iron and bronze objects were produced.<sup>40</sup> As mentioned above, evidence for metallurgical workshops in the vicinity of temple complexes has been found at several sites in the ancient Near East.<sup>41</sup> In the western room, three

39 Maeir 2012a, 30.

40 Eliyahu-Behar *et al.* 2012.

41 See Smith 2009 42–43 for Kition.



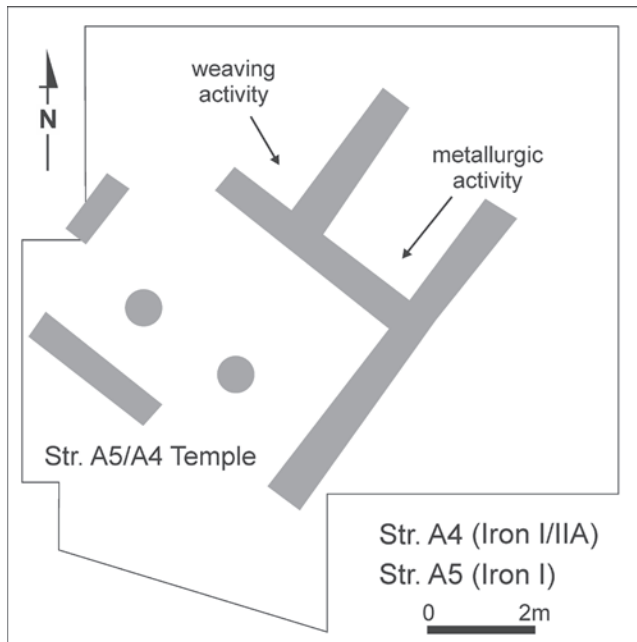


Figure 17.3. Strata A5/A4 temple with northern workshop rooms. Illustration: J. Rosenberg

extremely fragile perforated spool-shaped loom weights were found, similar to those excavated in 11th century BCE, Stratum XI adjacent to Temple 131 Tel Qasile as well as at other sites in the region (Fig. 17.4).<sup>42</sup> Their presence here indicates a warp-weighted loom, despite the fact that only three were found. Given their state of poor preservation it is quite likely that additional loom weights may have disintegrated.<sup>43</sup> Furthermore, it can be assumed based on previous evidence for associations between metallurgy and weaving workshops within temple complexes, this loom represents the same phenomenon.<sup>44</sup> Although the northern and western walls of this room have not been excavated it seems to mirror that of the metallurgy workshop on the other side of a shared wall and the impression is that this was a small space in which a single loom stood. Hence, we can infer limited production and that the textiles produced would have been solely for the needs of the temple.

A larger building was discovered in the 9th century BCE stratum of Area A (A3), just above the temple complex



Figure 17.4. Stratum A4 loom weights. Photo: D. Cassuto

which seems to have carried on the weaving tradition.<sup>45</sup> A concentration of more than 110 well preserved loom weights were found in this room.<sup>46</sup> The loom weights were all spherical and of more or less the same weights indicating that they were manufactured intentionally to be used together either as sets for several looms producing the same type and quality of fabric.<sup>47</sup>

In the same Stratum A3 room, a plastered bench was discovered alongside an assemblage of rare cultic objects (Fig. 17.5). These suggest a continuity in the religious function of the earlier structure (Figs. 17.6 and 17.7). However, the architecture and the quantity and standardised quality of the loom weights imply a larger scale of industrial or centralised textile production.<sup>48</sup>

In the Lower City, immediately below surface level in Area D, excavations revealed material dating to the 9th century BCE destruction identical to that found in Area A, with clusters of loom weights found throughout the area. The exposed architecture included large spaces, a paved area with a drainage canal, and a plastered floor with a circular depression. Among the special finds, were numerous chalices and finely made 9th-century century Philistine wares (Fig. 17.8 excavating a chalice in Area D). Large quantities of grinding stones, storage jars, and some 250 loom weights were also found. The skeletons of two young females intermingled among the loom weights, suggest that they were working at the loom at the time of the destruction. Excavations in Area D exposed a unique

42 Mazar 1980, 42; Shamir 1994, 35; Yasur-Landau 2007, 510–511.

43 Alternatively, they could have been overlooked due to their friability in the process of excavation. The quantity of loom weights recovered at a site may be only a percentage of an original total, as noted by Elgavish 1968, 33, and Shamir 1994, 37 that heavy rains can cause sunbaked loom weights to disintegrate.

44 See n. 27.

45 Maier 2012b, 37–38.

46 Cassuto 2012, 469, n. 3.

47 This stratum was violently destroyed as indicated by the five skeletons found in the destruction debris.

48 Cassuto 2012, 473.

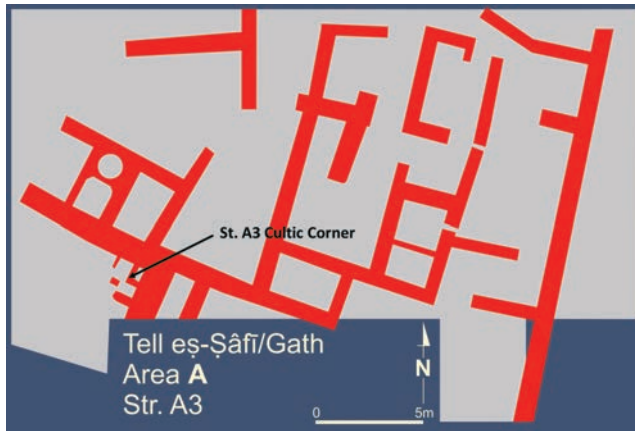


Figure 17.5. Plan of Stratum A3 with cultic corner. Illustration: J. Rosenberg



Figure 17.8. Excavation of a chalice in Area. Photo: R. Wiskin



Figure 17.6. Objects from the cultic corner in situ. Photo: R. Wiskin



Figure 17.9. Photo of Area D with Altar and loom weights. Skyview

large stone altar (50 × 50 × 100 cm), to the north of which was a large room with a plastered surface. To the east of this room was a surface covered with over 100 loom weights. An additional 46 more loom weights were stored in niche of a stone wall-like installation between the plaster-floored and the stone-paved spaces (Fig. 17.9).<sup>49</sup>

### Temples, cultic elements and weaving

A discussion on the roles of weaving in cultic contexts, or the modes of textile production associated with the cultic contexts identified at Tell eṣ-Şâfi/Gath, would profit from an examination of some of the defined cultic elements, in this case, altars and chalices, their functions and their meanings. For example, the occurrence of cultic elements in domestic contexts, “cultic corners”, demonstrates the



Figure 17.7. Objects from the Stratum A3 cultic corner. Photo: A. Maeir

<sup>49</sup> Maeir 2012b.



diversity behind their meanings.<sup>50</sup> Domestic cultic contexts are indicative of how people brought the divine into their homes. Domestic rituals would have focused on those issues most important to the household unit, besides health and fertility, a significant part of domestic religion would have been dedicated to “economic survival”, a point possibly shared by larger industrial endeavors as discussed below.<sup>51</sup>

While temples were dwellings for the deities, accessible only by the priests, who performed religious ceremonies for the worshippers, altars, located in adjacent open areas or courtyards, were accessible to the general public, enabling individuals the opportunity to take part in incense offerings or animal sacrifices. Altars, however, need not always be situated or associated with temple complexes.<sup>52</sup> In fact, excavations have revealed altars, as well as various cultic objects and vessels, in contexts not directly associated with temple structures. A prime example of this can be seen in Iron Age II Tel Miqne-Ekron where altars were found throughout the site in diverse contexts.<sup>53</sup>

### Altars

Exclusively cultic in nature, altars traditionally served as incense burners,<sup>54</sup> and their presence confers a sacred character to the contexts in which they are attested.<sup>55</sup> Hence, the decorated clay altars found in the local industrial zone dedicated to olive oil production at Ekron implies a level of sanctity in this area.<sup>56</sup> The quantity of olive oil estimated to have been produced at the site was substantially more than the requirements of the residents of the city. Gitin notes that the magnitude of the industrial zone and the proximity of the clay altars to the olive pressing rooms indicate that rather than the focus of centralised religious activity the altars were “used in the administration of the industry, perhaps by the local priestly class on behalf of the royal authority,”<sup>57</sup> or alternatively, to make worship accessible to the workers.<sup>58</sup>

A unique example of an altar associated with another industry comes from Tel Rehov, where excavations exposed an apiary estimated to have produced vast amounts of honey

and beeswax for commercial trade.<sup>59</sup> An altar adjacent to the rows of beehives implies a ritual aspect to the apiary complex.<sup>60</sup> The presence of altars in the 7th-century BCE olive oil industry buildings, which apparently served a secondary function as textile workshops during the off-seasons,<sup>61</sup> and the example from Tel Rehov demonstrate an association of cult and industry similar to that in Area D at Tell eš-Šâfi/Gath.<sup>62</sup>

### Chalices

Chalices, frequently associated with cultic activities, are ubiquitous in both Areas A and D at Tell eš-Šâfi/Gath.<sup>63</sup> Found throughout the southern Levant, iconographic evidence of such vessels are depicted with flames or vapors rising out of them suggesting that they were used for burning incense or heating fragrant oils, at times, laced with hallucinogenic matter.<sup>64</sup> The diversity of find-spots in which chalices have been found in temple, industrial, and domestic contexts implies a quotidian function not necessarily regulated to formal centralised religious activities.<sup>65</sup>

### Conclusions

The evidence for textile production in juxtaposition to religious elements found at Tell eš-Šâfi/Gath offers a greater understanding of the complexity of these associations and raises several points. In my opinion, the explanation can be found by understanding which entity was serving which. On the one hand, in line with the textual and archaeological evidence of workshops within religious compounds, cultic centers were known to prepare their own textiles for autonomous consumption. Such was most likely the case for the Iron Age I temple complex found in Tell eš-Šâfi/Gath Area A (Strata A5/A4), with its associated small-scale metallurgical and textile production workshops. Whether the later Iron Age II Stratum A3 structure was also a temple is unclear. The changes in architecture and orientation indicate that the structures were either domestic or industrial in nature. Nonetheless, the cultic corner and the large number of loom weights suggest a level of continuity in the use

50 Hitchcock 2011.

51 Alpert Nakhai 2011, 350–351; Hitchcock 2011.

52 Examples of biblical narratives, for example, describe the construction of altars in open areas before the construction of the temple in Jerusalem, for examples, see *Genesis* 35:7; *Exodus* 17:15; *Judges* 6:24.

53 Gitin 2002, 113–115.

54 Gitin 2002, 96.

55 Gitin 2002, 101.

56 Gitin 1995, 67; Gitin 1989, 59\*–60\*; Gitin 2002, 113.

57 Gitin 1989, 60\*.

58 Gitin 2002, 115.

59 Mazar and Panitz-Cohen 2007, 207–219.

60 Mazar and Panitz-Cohen 2007, 212–213, 209.

61 Gitin 1997, 90.

62 See Cahill 2006 for another example of textile production and cultic paraphernalia in the same vicinity.

63 Maier 2012a, 37–38.

64 Namdar *et al.* 2010, 169; Gadot *et al.* 2014, 7071.

65 Gadot *et al.* 72. Although Fowler's (1985, 26) suggestion that incense was used to remove putrid smells may be correct, in light of the abundance of cultic material it is not relevant to the finds at Tell eš-Šâfi/Gath Area D.

of space for textile production and cultic activities. It is conceivable that temples or temple jurisdictions would have established year-round large-scale textile workshops not only for religious needs but also for trade, in order to bring in supplementary income. In the absence of a defined temple complex in Stratum A3, however, such an interpretation remains tentative. On the other hand, it is possible that the textile production industry was the main focus of activity, with religious elements playing a secondary role. Such seems to be the case in the Lower City, Area D, where cultic elements were distributed throughout the complex.

With this in mind, the evidence revealed thus far from Area D at Tell eṣ-Şâfi/Gath may be studied. The nature of the architecture that has been revealed thus far does not conclusively support the identification of either a domestic or a temple context.<sup>66</sup> Evidence of the abundance of activities, particularly weaving, can suggest a large-scale production center. Its location – close to the Elah River at the base of the tell – on the one hand would have provided ready access to water for any number of workshop activities, while keeping toxic fumes,<sup>67</sup> far away from the city center, or on the other hand close to the entrance to the city where a nearby market would have enabled copious opportunities for trade.

What role would cult have played in the context of Area D at Tell eṣ-Şâfi/Gath? One explanation may be the presence of a strongly religious community requiring a readily accessible worship option.<sup>68</sup> A possibility, considering the long distance of the Lower City from the Upper City at Tell eṣ-Şâfi/Gath, where a temple or temples were likely located. It is also conceivable that, like domestic cultic activities, the presence of religious elements in a large-scale industry was meant to ensure “economic survival”, with a symbolic portion of the finished merchandise, “sacrificed” as an offering to the deities for blessings to ensure good fortune.

An alternative explanation could be that this phenomenon was part of a “sacred economy”, similar to those identified in Late Bronze Age Cyprus, where the presence of religious objects in industrial contexts was interpreted as intended to remind and impose a system of hierarchy upon the workers, hence empowering the elite.<sup>69</sup> The placement of cultic elements in the physical context of a workshop would have sanctified the space turning it into an instrument of religious

authority.<sup>70</sup> The use of “belief systems” and “rituals of sanctification” would have been used by the elite to maintain stability and administrative authority, which were recognised and revered by the people in the community.

Nevertheless, the distribution of loom weights discovered in varied cultic settings at Tell eṣ-Şâfi/Gath demonstrates diversity in the associations of textile production and ritual activities in public contexts. The nature of these physical settings reflects the differences in the purpose of the manufacturing process and the producers. In association with cultic elements, textile workshops can be interpreted as playing varying roles depending on the nature of the contexts. Invariably, specialised craft workshops, in any form, were an integral part of the core of economic, social, and cultic activities of an ancient community and despite the absence of organic material evidence, there is little doubt that textile workshops had a greater part in ancient society than previously presumed.

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66 However, evidence from the most recent seasons of excavation in Area D seem to indicate a continuity of cultic activity from an earlier stratum there seems to be more and more evidence indicating that this may have actually been a temple complex, Aren Maeir pers. comm.

67 For example, from dyeing or fulling, or any other craft, that would have produced putrid smells or smoke.

68 Such is Gitin’s (2002, 115) understanding of the altars in the industrial zone at Tel Migne-Ekron.

69 Knapp 1986, 67.

70 Knapp 1986, 67.

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## The High Priest's garments of mixed wool and linen (*sha'atnez*) compared to archaeological textiles found in the Land of Israel

Orit Shamir<sup>1</sup>

The High Priest (in Hebrew *kohen gadol*) was the chief official of the religion practiced by the Jewish people until the destruction of the Second Temple in 70 CE.

According to the Hebrew Bible, the High Priest was required to wear garments of mixed wool and linen, *sha'atnez*, while serving in the Jerusalem Temple. However, *sha'atnez* was forbidden for the remainder of the Jewish population. The present article will explain the concept of *sha'atnez*, and review the *sha'atnez* textiles that have been recovered in the Land of Israel (*Eretz Israel*, a biblical term, mentioned in the Bible e.g. 1 Samuel 13:19). Afterwards, I will compare them to the High Priest's *sha'atnez* garments.

### The concept of *sha'atnez*

*Sha'atnez* – wearing garments of mixed wool and linen – is forbidden by Jewish law. This prohibition is mentioned twice in the Hebrew Bible: *Leviticus* (19:19) states that “you shall not put on cloth from a mixture of two kinds of material”. *Sha'atnez* garments are also mentioned, but the specific

materials are not listed. In *Deuteronomy* (22:11), however, it is added that “You shall not wear cloth combining wool and linen”.

The prohibition of the mixture of different kinds of material is mentioned in additional contexts, such as interbreeding different species of animals, working different species of animals under the same yoke, and planting different species of seeds together in a single field.

*Sha'atnez* applies only to sheep's wool and linen. Combining any other materials, such as cotton, silk, camel hair, mohair, hemp or nettle, does not constitute *sha'atnez*. The wool and linen may not be spun, woven, sewn, tied, knotted, or knitted together for garment use. Even one linen thread found in a large garment of wool renders the entire garment *sha'atnez*.<sup>2</sup>

Men and women are equally obligated by all the prohibitions of *sha'atnez*, and it is also forbidden to clothe a child in *sha'atnez* garments.<sup>3</sup> However, there are two exceptions to this rule: the garments of the High Priest, and the tassels (*tzitzith*) that are fastened at each corner of the *tallit* (prayer shawl) and the *tallit katan* (a garment worn by observant Jewish males), could be made of *sha'atnez*.<sup>4</sup> “Speak to the Israelite people and instruct them to make for themselves fringes on the corners of their garments throughout the ages; let them attach a cord of blue to the fringe at each corner”<sup>5</sup> and: “You shall make tassels on the

1 I would like to thank Prof. Nadav Na'aman, Rabbi Nahum Ben-Yehuda and Prof. Brian Schmidt for their help and comments and to Aviva Bar-Am for editing the article. The Israel Antiquities Authority's Nash Family Center for Ancient Textiles and Organic Materials houses a wealth of textiles, basketry, cordage, wood and leather artifacts, as well as fruits and seeds – dating from 8000 BCE until 1800 CE, and deriving from excavations conducted throughout the country. A selection of objects from the collection can be viewed on the IAA's National Treasures Online website ([www.antiquities.org.il/t/Default\\_en.aspx](http://www.antiquities.org.il/t/Default_en.aspx)).

2 Brauner 2006, 1; *Mishnah* tractate Kil'ayim 9:9; *Sifrah Qedoshim* 2:4; *Sifrah Devarim* 235.

3 Brauner 2006, 2.

4 *Deuteronomy* 22:11–12.

5 *Numbers* 15:38

four corners of the garment with which you cover yourself”.<sup>6</sup> While the biblical sources describe only the tassel’s shape and colour, the sages elaborated on the composition of the material as well.

The prohibition against wearing *sha’atnez* garments does not affect their production. Thus, a Jew is allowed to produce *sha’atnez* garments for a non-Jew, or to sell them to him on the condition that he knows that the garment will not be sold to another Jew and that the *sha’atnez* is easily recognisable.<sup>7</sup> This law is strictly observed by the Jewish Orthodox community today and many people bring clothing to special experts who are employed to detect the presence of *sha’atnez* using instruments such as microscopes.

### ***Sha’atnez* textiles preserved in the archaeological record**

Although thousands of textiles in the Land of Israel have been examined by the author,<sup>8</sup> not one piece of *sha’atnez* has been recovered from any Roman-period Jewish site. This is in sharp contrast to Roman sites in neighbouring areas, for example in Syria, at sites such as Dura Europos and Palmyra,<sup>9</sup> and in Coptic Egypt, which have yielded great quantities of textiles made of mixed linen and wool.<sup>10</sup> Yet, a few non-Jewish, pre-Roman and Roman sites in the Southern Levant have yielded *Sha’atnez* textiles (Table 18.1):

#### *Wadi ed-Dâliyah*

Wadi ed-Dâliyah is situated 14 km northwest of Jericho. It consists of caves (Fig. 18.1) that contained the skeletons of perhaps c. 100 inhabitants of the city of Samaria who had

fled to the desert upon the arrival of the armies of Alexander the Great from Egypt (331 BCE). The leaders of Samaria had taken part in rebellious acts against Alexander and killed Andromachos, the Macedonian governor. Upon hearing of Alexander’s march toward the city, the leaders of Samaria escaped to the caves. They brought with them food supplies, storage and cooking vessels, as well as personal belongings, coins, textiles and papyri, mostly documenting financial transactions from 375–334 BCE. All the documents had originally been drafted and sealed in Samaria. The owners of the papyri met their deaths in the cave; they were men of means, aristocrats, leaders and patricians of Samaria who had fled the city when Alexander the Great marched in. Whole families had found temporary refuge in the Wadi ed-Dâliyah caves; they had been fairly well supplied with food and other necessities until they were apparently discovered and killed by the Macedonians. The documents and *bullae* found in the cave, as well as the exquisite signet rings, jewellery and remnants of fine linen confirm



Figure 18.1. Wadi ed-Dâliyah caves. (After Lapp and Lapp 1974, pl. 47b).

Table 18.1. Sites from which *sha’atnez* textiles have been recovered.

| Site                                | No. of textiles                | No. of <i>sha’atnez</i> textiles |
|-------------------------------------|--------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| Wadi ed-Dâliyah                     | 58                             | 3                                |
| ‘En Tamar                           | c. 200                         | c. 4                             |
| Cave of Letters<br>(sewing threads) | 346                            | 1                                |
| Masada, (sewing<br>threads)*        | c. 1600, only 122<br>published | 7                                |
| Masada                              |                                | 2                                |
| Kuntillet ‘Ajrud                    | 120                            | 3                                |

\*wool sewing threads on linen textiles or *vice versa*

6 Deuteronomy 22:12

7 Brauner 2006, 2.

8 Shamir 2007a.

9 Pfister and Bellinger 1945, 25, no. 256; Pfister 1934, 13; Pfister 1937, pls. 2:C, 4:F.

10 Baginski and Tidhar 1980.

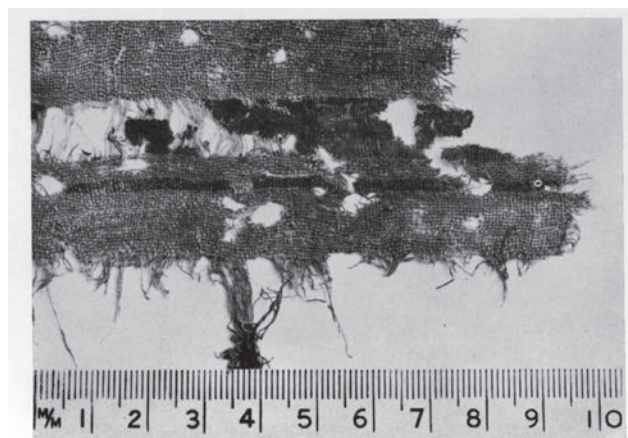


Figure 18.2. Wadi ed-Dâliyah *sha’atnez*, textile no. 2. (After Lapp and Lapp 1974, pl. 38b).

the origins of the men and their status.<sup>11</sup> Their hiding place was discovered by the Macedonians, and they probably suffocated when Alexander's troops built a fire at the mouth of the caves. Some of the skeletons were originally covered with mats, instead of lying on them. The evidence points to a catastrophe in which a large number of refugees perished in the cave on the same occasion.<sup>12</sup>

The Samaritan community's culture and religion are unique. Although the Samaritans claim that they and the Jews share the same origin and the two peoples diverged post-exile, Rabbinic literature of the Mishnaic and Talmudic periods argue that the Samaritans were brought to Samaria by the Assyrians, who called them *Cutheans*, referring to the ancient city of Kutha, geographically located in what is today Iraq.

The Samaritans consider only the *Pentateuch* to be a holy book, as opposed to the other sections of the Hebrew Bible and the Talmud, and their version differs in several ways from the Jewish Masoretic version.<sup>13</sup> Based in the Nablus area of Israel, the Samaritans still keep their rules. Their temple was at Mount Gerizim near Nablus from the

first half of the 5th century BCE until 128 BCE when it was destroyed by the Hasmoneans.

A total of 58 textiles and braids have been recovered from the site including 36 of linen, 12 of wool, three of linen mixed with wool (Fig. 18.3), three of camel hair, one of camel hair mixed with wool, as well as three linen braids (Table 18.2). The three *sha'atnez* textiles which contain both linen warp and woollen weft bands are:

- a) No. 2, (Fig. 18.2) which was identified by Crowfoot as a woman's scarf or veil, with the remains of a fringe at one end. It is decorated with woollen shaded bands in grey-green, purple, blue and red;
- b) No. 3, a linen textile decorated with blue-green wool bands, probably the edge of a piece of clothing;
- c) No. 4, which is probably part of a tunic with remnants of a red band.<sup>14</sup>

Because we lack information about the finds, including knowledge about the deceased, we are unable to offer any interpretation about the *sha'atnez*.

### Masada

Masada is located in the Judean Desert, 25 km south of 'En Gedi. The most important period at the site is the Roman era, especially during the First Revolt (66–73 CE) of the Jewish population against Rome. Thousands of textiles were found there, but only 122 have been published.<sup>15</sup>

Seven (out of 122) examples of linen sewing threads on a wool textile were found at Masada<sup>16</sup> and may all be either of Roman origin (*e.g.* military cloaks, where the linen thread is usually Z-spun) or furnishings.<sup>17</sup> Among the thousands of textiles studied by H. Granger-Taylor, there are only two

Table 18.2. Textiles recovered at Wadi ed-Dâliyah.

| Material                                         | No. |
|--------------------------------------------------|-----|
| Linen                                            | 36  |
| Linen braids                                     | 3   |
| Wool                                             | 12  |
| Wool and linen woven together – <i>sha'atnez</i> | 3   |
| Camel hair                                       | 3   |
| Camel hair mixed with wool                       | 1   |

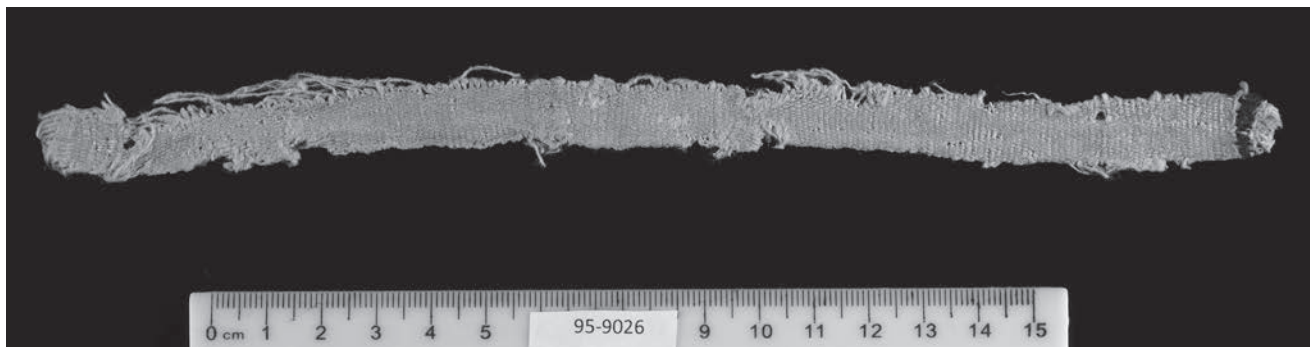


Figure 18.3. Masada *sha'atnez* (IAA. inv. no. 1995-9026). Courtesy of the Israel Antiquities Authority. Photo: Clara Amit.

11 Cross 1963; Eshel 2007, 223; Gurwin, Goren and Lipschits 2015, 91.

12 Lapp and Lapp 1974; Lapp 1993, 321.

13 Shoulson 2008.

14 Crowfoot 1974, 60, 63. The Wadi el-Dâliyah textiles are stored in the Kelso Bible Lands Museum, Pittsburgh. <http://www.pts.edu/museum>.

15 Sheffer and Granger-Taylor 1994.

16 Sheffer and Granger-Taylor 1994, 241, 270.

17 Hero Granger-Taylor, pers. comm.

examples of textiles woven with a combination of wool and linen – probably both pillow cases (Fig. 18.3).<sup>18</sup> Cushions, pillows, and tapestry which do not come in contact with the naked body do not come under the prohibition.<sup>19</sup>

### *Cave of Letters*

The Cave of Letters is located at Nahal Hever in the Judean Desert and has been dated to the Roman period, more specifically to the Jewish Bar Kokhba revolt (132–135 CE) against Rome. It is a barely accessible cave and was used as a refuge and not for continuous habitation. Out of 346 textiles, only one example of linen sewing threads on a wool textile was found in the Cave of Letters (No. 49).<sup>20</sup>

### *‘En Tamar*

‘En Tamar (“the spring of the palm tree”, possibly to be identified as ancient Tamaro) is a Nabataean desert oasis southwest of the Dead Sea. It is located c. 10 km from Mezad Tamar, one of the way stations on the road to Petra.

Excavations at the site uncovered a burial cave dating back to the 1st–3rd centuries CE<sup>21</sup> or late 2nd–early 3rd centuries CE.<sup>22</sup> The archaeological finds at ‘En Tamar attest that this was the second most important settlement after Zoora in the northern ‘Arabah Valley. According to the excavator the inhabitants of the site benefited from the general prosperity of this region, which derived from a local economy based on date palm plantations and balsam groves.<sup>23</sup>

The Nabateans controlled the Spice Routes joining Petra and Gaza northwards to Syria and westwards to the Mediterranean. They did not suffer from the dramatic events that afflicted the Jewish population, which suffered appallingly because of the Jewish Revolts, which themselves caused far-reaching demographic changes.

The burial cave was cut into the soft marl. The burial loci, hewn in the walls of the cave and in its floor, were five sealed cist graves appropriate to the size of the deceased. They were covered with stone slabs, making it possible to return and use the site for family burial over several generations. Skeletons of men, women and children were discovered, all wrapped in shrouds.

The finds – pottery, glass, silver jewellery, carnelian and gold-plated beads, the leather sole of a sandal of the *caliga* type with bronze nails, wooden artefacts and textiles – reflect



Figure 18.4. ‘En Tamar. Linen textile decorated with wool bands (IAA. No. 2003-9038). Courtesy of the Israel Antiquities Authority. Photo: Clara Amit.

the wealth of the family whose members were interred in the burial cave.<sup>24</sup> Several hundred artefacts made of organic materials – textiles, basketry, cordage, leather and wood – were discovered with the deceased as well as short date-palm cords, fruits and seeds of date palms, nuts, olives and Egyptian balsam (*Balanites aegyptiaca*).<sup>25</sup>

The many thin leather fragments of good quality were probably parts of shrouds similar to those found at Khirbat Qazone<sup>26</sup> and Hegra.<sup>27</sup> Among the 200 plain-weave linen textiles, there is a small group of linen textiles decorated with very thin woollen red bands (Fig. 18.4).<sup>28</sup> As they do not display any stitching or signs of reuse, they were in primary use as shrouds, another indication of the high economic status of the deceased.

### *Kuntillet ‘Ajrud (Ḥorvat Teman)*

Kuntillet ‘Ajrud is located on an isolated hill, in the north-eastern Sinai Peninsula. It was built near the junction of ancient roads traversing the Sinai Desert (Figs. 18.5 and 18.6), 10–15 km west of Darb el-Ghazza, along the road leading from the coast of Philistia to the Gulf of Eilat. It was probably built by Jeroboam II King of Israel (c. 786–746 BCE) in an effort to control the important trade route that passes nearby.<sup>29</sup>

During the Iron Age, the kingdoms of Israel and Judah emerged as important local powers in the Levant: Israel emerged in the north in the early 9th century BCE and Judah

18 Granger-Taylor 2014.

19 Talmud, Tractate Kilaim 9:2.

20 Yadin 1963, 241, 92 textiles were published by Y. Yadin (1963). An additional 254 textiles were found during excavations conducted in 2000–2001 at the Cave of Letters, Arav and Freund 2001; Shamir 2007a, 141–145; Shamir 2016.

21 Hirschfeld 2006.

22 Tali Gini, pers. comm.

23 Hirschfeld 2006.

24 Hirschfeld 2006.

25 Shamir 2006; Amar and Shamir 2014.

26 Politis 1998; Politis 1999; Shanks 1999.

27 Bouchaud *et al.* 2015.

28 Hirschfeld 2006; Shamir 2006, 37.

29 Na’aman 2015, 39.



emerged in the south in the second half of the 8th century BCE. The northern Israelite characteristics reflected in the finds show that Kuntillet 'Ajrud was an Israelite and not a Judean site.

The site of Kuntillet 'Ajrud contained two structures (Fig. 18.6), Building A and Building B, which differed greatly in their architecture, finds, and apparently also in their functions. Building A, the larger of the two, has a rectangular, fortress-like plan with four towers.<sup>30</sup> The two long spaces on either side of the Central Court were storerooms and not casemate rooms. The narrow space to the east of the court, the "Bench-room" (Fig. 18.7) – which was divided by the only entrance to the building – was used to store vessels and special dedicatory objects. Plastered benches are typical of cultic buildings in the Iron Age and interpreted as places for votive offerings and as a common form of sanctuary.<sup>31</sup>

Building B was almost completely empty of finds but has eight paintings (Fig. 18.8) and inscriptions on the walls out of 12.<sup>32</sup> The subjects of the paintings include human figures on a city wall, a chequered border, a lotus flower border, palmette trees, and a seated figure in colours of reds, yellow and black.<sup>33</sup>

The uniqueness of the site is in its unusual finds and their quantity. The most important are the inscriptions, almost all of them written in Hebrew and incised in stone, on pottery vessels and plaster walls and a few plaster inscriptions written in the Phoenician language. A number of blessings are addressed to "YHWH ... and his Asherah".<sup>34</sup>

According to Zeev Meshel, the excavator of the site, the contents of the inscriptions, the mention of various deities, the offerings dedicated at the site, and *sha'atnez* textiles, all attest to its serving as a religious site with a cultic function that, due to its location, was related to the royal journeys to Eilat and Ezion-Geber.<sup>35</sup>

Around 20 doughnut-shaped loom weights were discovered at Kuntillet 'Ajrud (Fig. 18.9), but it may be assumed that there were many more. Their average width



Figure 18.5. Kuntillet 'Ajrud, Aerial view (after Meshel and Goren 2012, 12). Courtesy of Prof. Zeev Meshel, Institute of Archaeology of Tel Aviv University and the Israel Exploration Society.

is 8.5 cm, and their height 4.5 cm, while the average weight is 250 grams. Eleven loom weights and a wooden beam, which could have belonged to a loom, were discovered in the western storeroom. Five loom weights, remnants of wood, and heaps of fibres and threads were found in the southern storeroom.<sup>36</sup>

This indicates that weaving was carried out at the site, although most likely on a small scale. The absence of spinning implements – spindles and spindle-whorls – can, according to Sheffer and Tidhar, be explained by the fact that they were made of wood, which was not preserved in the archaeological record.<sup>37</sup> However 21 un-carbonised wooden objects were found at the site, which renders this explanation unlikely.<sup>38</sup> Besides, Iron Age whorls discovered in sites located in the territories of Israel and Judah were usually made of basalt or other types of stone.<sup>39</sup> It is therefore possible that weavers usually did not spin at the site, especially not flax, a plant which was not grown in this region.<sup>40</sup> Heaps of threads, but not fibres, were found at the site.

Loom weights are often found at Iron Age sites in Israel, near and within cultic structures, pointing to the existence of workshops for the production of textiles inside the sacred enclosures.<sup>41</sup> Such an example is Tel Mique-Ekron from the

30 Boertien has summarised other interpretations of the site 2013, 307–308.

31 Boertien 2013, 307.

32 Meshel 2012, XXI.

33 Beck 2012, 184.

34 Meshel 2012, XXI; Ahituv, Eshel and Meshel 2012, 98–99. For a discussion of the "woven coverings for Asherah" (2 Kings 23:7) see Boertien 2007, 1; Boertien 2014, 152; Na'aman 1996; Na'aman and Lisovsky 2008.

35 Meshel 2012, XXII. Some scholars e.g. T. Ornan (2015) does not agree with the interpretation of the site as a religious centre.

36 Sheffer and Tidhar 2012, 305; Sitry 2012, 317.

37 Sheffer and Tidhar 2012, 305.

38 Sitry 2012, 317–326.

39 Shamir 1996, 149.

40 Shamir 1996, 142.

41 Sheffer and Tidhar 2012, 307, 310.

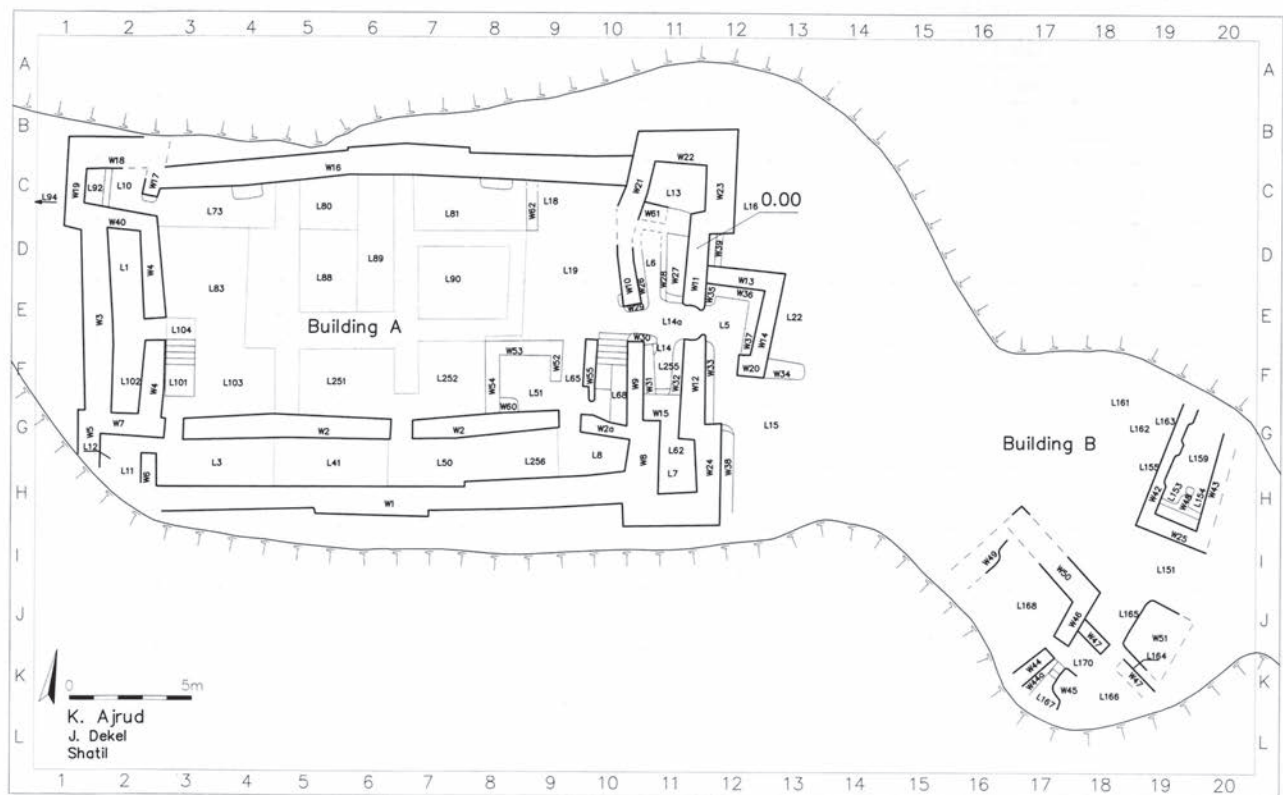


Figure 18.6. Kuntillet 'Ajrud, plan of the buildings (after Meshel 2012, XXIII). Courtesy of Prof. Zeev Meshel, Institute of Archaeology of Tel Aviv University and the Israel Exploration Society.

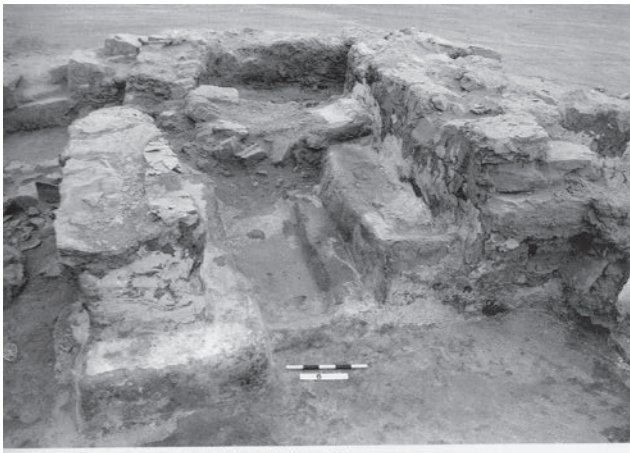


Figure 18.7. Kuntillet 'Ajrud, the 'Bench-room' (after Meshel and Goren 2012, 27, fig. 2.31). Courtesy of Prof. Zeev Meshel, Institute of Archaeology of Tel Aviv University and the Israel Exploration Society.

11th century BCE, where 27 loom weights were found in Building 350, which served as a large shrine or temple.<sup>42</sup>

<sup>42</sup> Shamir 2007b.



Figure 18.8. Kuntillet 'Ajrud, wall painting (after Beck 2012, 195, fig. 6.41). Courtesy of Prof. Zeev Meshel, Institute of Archaeology of Tel Aviv University and the Israel Exploration Society.

In Jordan, examples include e.g. at Khirbet al-Mudayna in Moab, Tell Deir 'Alla and Tell Abu Sarbut.<sup>43</sup>

<sup>43</sup> Boertien 2007, 2008, 2013, 2014.

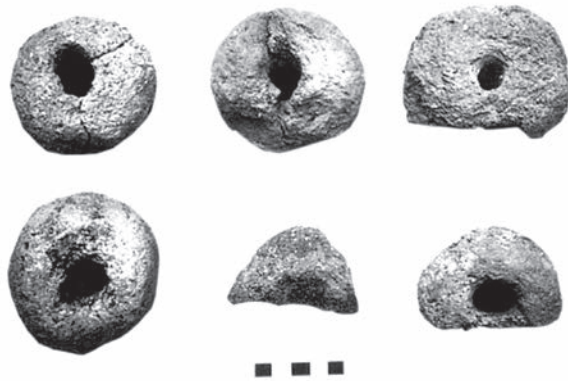


Figure 18.9. Kuntillet 'Ajrud, Loom weights (after Sheffer and Tidhar 2012, 305, fig. 9.26). Courtesy of Prof. Zeev Meshel, Institute of Archaeology of Tel Aviv University and the Israel Exploration Society.

Similar workshops and storehouses in temple compounds have been recorded in Mesopotamia, Egypt and Greece.<sup>44</sup> In Egypt a special kind of linen was manufactured in the temples. This was the “royal linen” intended for priestly vestments.<sup>45</sup> Furthermore, tablets from Ur illustrate that weaving was the main enterprise in the temple economy.<sup>46</sup>

One hundred and twenty textiles (Table 18.3) were found at Kuntillet 'Ajrud. Most of them are made of linen, 11 of wool and three are made of wool and linen woven together – *sha'atnez*. Most of the textiles probably belonged to garments, and the quality of most of the fabric reflects skilled craftsmanship.<sup>47</sup> The threads are generally well spun, the fabrics indicate careful weaving, and the stitching is expertly and carefully carried out.<sup>48</sup>

Two of the *sha'atnez* textiles are undyed and undecorated, made of linen warp and wool weft. The third textile is made of linen ornamented with red wool (madder) and blue (indigo) linen threads (Fig. 18.10). In view of the biblical prohibition on wearing mixed wool and linen (*sha'atnez*) garments, it seems surprising to find these remnants of *sha'atnez* at Kuntillet 'Ajrud. The third textile was explained

Table 18.3. The textiles recovered at Kuntillet 'Ajrud.

| Material                                         | No. |
|--------------------------------------------------|-----|
| Linen                                            | 106 |
| Wool                                             | 11  |
| Wool and linen woven together – <i>sha'atnez</i> | 3   |

by A. Sheffer and A. Tidhar as a type considered by Bible commentators as being reserved for the High Priest.<sup>49</sup>

The fact that most of the fragments were of linen and only a small percentage of wool is surprising for a site in the desert, where the locally available raw materials for producing garments were sheep's wool or camel hair. A possible explanation for the high percentage of linen finds may indeed be the religious function of the site<sup>50</sup> and its place on the trade route to Elath.

Fifty km north of Kuntillet 'Ajrud there is another Iron Age II site, Kadesh Barnea, which has yielded 50 linen textiles.<sup>51</sup> This site was used as a fortress. According to Z. Meshel the presence of linen at Kadesh Barnea should not come as a surprise, however, since it was a very important border-fortress, and as such it is likely that priests lived and served there.<sup>52</sup>

Very few textiles from the Iron Age 1200–586 BCE have been discovered in the kingdoms of Israel and Judah. A linen textile from 12th century BCE Beth She'an,<sup>53</sup> and a spindle with linen threads still wrapped around it was revealed in the 10th century BCE stratum at Tell el-Hama in the Jordan Valley.<sup>54</sup> A silver treasure from Arad Stratum 11, dated to the 10th century BCE also wrapped with linen textile.<sup>55</sup> At Kadesh Barnea, also a desert site, located in Sinai, carbonised linen textile fragments were found together as a group among collapsed material outside the western wall of the fortress dated to the 7th century BCE. The spinning is of high quality and the threads are usually consistent in their thickness. The technique of weaving at all these sites is tabby and its variations. It is reasonable to assume that the textiles were used for garments because they are delicate, and it is unlikely that imported linen was used for anything other than garments.<sup>56</sup>

The source of the linen threads at Kuntillet 'Ajrud and Kadesh Barnea could be Beth She'an or the Jordan Valley,

44 Sheffer and Tidhar 1991, 12 n. 33.

45 Boertien 2013, 311; Hall 1986, 1; Sheffer and Tidhar 2012, 307, 310.

46 Boertien 2013, 311; Browning 1988, 51–56; Quillien 2014.

47 The textiles were investigated by Sheffer and Tidhar 1991; Sheffer and Tidhar 2012. After the publication of the Kuntillet 'Ajrud final report by Meshel in 2012, it elicited a lively, substantial response from the research community Schmidt, 2015, 7.

48 Sheffer and Tidhar 1991, 14.

49 Sheffer and Tidhar 1991, 14. Sheffer and Tidhar 2012, 289, 307.

50 Sheffer and Tidhar 1991, 14; Sheffer and Tidhar 2012.

51 Shamir 2007b.

52 Sheffer and Tidhar 2012, 308, Appendix A.

53 Shamir 2009.

54 Shamir 1996, 142.

55 Aharoni 1980.

56 Shamir 2007c.





Figure 18.10. Kuntillet 'Ajrud. Linen textile decorated with wool bands (after Sheffer and Tidhar 2012, 301). Courtesy of Prof. Zeev Meshel, Institute of Archaeology of Tel Aviv University and the Israel Exploration Society.

including Jericho.<sup>57</sup> They were probably not imported from Egypt, since none of the artefacts discovered at Kuntillet Ajrud and Kadesh Barnea have been identified as Egyptian.

The clay vessels which were found at Kuntillet Ajrud are also imported, some from Judah and some from the northern part of Israel, which was also plausibly the source of linen.<sup>58</sup>

### Jewish (Israelite) Priestly Garments

The Hebrew Bible does not explain why it is forbidden to mix the two fibres – wool and linen – together, but ancient and modern interpreters have suggested various explanations. One explanation is related to the priests' garments: Only the priests were allowed to wear *sha'atnez*, as indicated by the description of the priests' clothes while wandering in the desert and worshipping in the tabernacle. Why was it necessary for the High Priest to wear clothes made of mixed wool and linen while serving in the Temple? Perhaps this was to distinguish between the worship carried out by the priests and that which was carried out by the ordinary population. This explanation is corroborated by Josephus Flavius (Joseph ben Matityahu, 37–100 CE), who wrote in his book *Antiquities of the Jews* that wearing *sha'atnez* was prohibited and reserved for the priests of Israel.

I will discuss only one aspect of the priests' clothes: the *sha'atnez*. Although the garments of the High Priest differed from the garments of ordinary priests, most scholars agree that all of them wore *sha'atnez*. Ordinary priests wore *sha'atnez* only in their girdle<sup>59</sup> while the High Priest wore *sha'atnez* in additional garments.

As Boertien states, the use of special fabrics for liturgical garments was, and still is, a common phenomenon worldwide. In Egypt, a special kind of Egyptian linen – the

“royal linen” – was intended for priestly vestments<sup>60</sup> and in Mesopotamia, where the predominant fibre was wool, the priests were also dressed in linen.<sup>61</sup>

The Bible requires that the High Priest's vestment should be decorated and coloured, for honour and for beauty: “Make sacral vestments for your brother Aaron, for dignity and adornment.”<sup>62</sup> Indeed, the Talmud informs us that when the Persian king Ahasuerus held a feast for his advisors and officers and sought to impress them with his greatness (as recorded in the scroll of Esther, which tells the story of Purim) he put off his own royal vestments and donned the uniform of the High Priest, which was more precious than his own. (These priestly garments had been in royal possession since the destruction of the First Temple by the Babylonians.) Another aspect of “honour and beauty” means that the uniform must fit perfectly. Thus, it was forbidden for the trousers, for example, to be too long or too short. The garments were made to order for each priest, tailored to fit his measurements exactly.<sup>63</sup>

The eight garments worn by the High Priest are as follows: The breastplate, ephod, robe, tunic, turban, belt, crown and trousers.<sup>64</sup> Three of these garments were *sha'atnez* woven with purple, blue, and scarlet wool threads and plied linen threads,<sup>65</sup> considered the most expensive dyes and produced from *Hexaplex trunculus* (*tekhelet*), *Murex Brandaris* or *Thais Haemastoma* (*argaman*) shellfish and the kermes (*tola'at shani*) insect. These garments were essential in order for the priests to function in their sacred capacity; so much so that in their absence, the offerings made by the priests in the Temple have no validity. Without his uniform, the priest

57 Shamir 1996, 142; Shamir 2009.

58 Meshel 2012, 279.

59 [https://www.templeinstitute.org/priestly\\_garments.htm](https://www.templeinstitute.org/priestly_garments.htm)

60 Boertien 2014, 152; Hall 1986, 18.

61 Quillien 2014; Sheffer and Tidhar 2012, 310.

62 Exodus 28:2.

63 Leviticus 6:3; [https://www.templeinstitute.org/priestly\\_garments.htm](https://www.templeinstitute.org/priestly_garments.htm)

64 Exodus 28:4.

65 Exodus 28:6, 15.



who serves in the Holy Temple is considered as a “stranger” serving before the Lord – like a non-priest. Thus, no priest, including the High Priest himself is fit to serve in the Temple unless he is wearing the sacred garments. As the Talmud states, “While they are clothed in the priestly garments, they are clothed in the priesthood; but when they are not wearing the garments, the priesthood is not upon them.”<sup>66</sup>

## Conclusions

Although thousands of textiles have been found in Israel, only a few are *sha'atnez*. For the few cases of *sha'atnez* at Jewish sites I have presented possible explanations, although some have no reasonable explanation.

The concern to avoid *sha'atnez* during the Roman period, despite the hardship of war against the Roman army and the definite temptation to buy these textiles from non-Jews at the markets, is impressive. This concern furthermore caused technical challenges in the weaving process. Stitching wool textiles with linen threads or vice versa is also forbidden in *sha'atnez*. Their rare presence in the sewing threads in the Cave of the Letters and at Masada can be explained by the harsh siege conditions inflicted by the Roman army.

It is interesting to note, however, that *Sha'atnez* is allowed for non-garments such as pillow cases from Masada.

Another important fact is the almost complete absence of mixed wool and linen (*sha'atnez*) textiles at non-Jewish sites, except in a few cases in the Roman period in a Nabatean burial at 'En Tamar.<sup>67</sup> It is striking that most of the textiles in Judea during the Roman period were produced by Jews and purchased by the non-Jewish population. There is a great resemblance between the Nabatean and Jewish textiles (1st–2nd centuries CE), including shaded bands and the number of threads per cm.

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66 BT Zevachim 17:B.

67 Shamir 2006.

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## Between fashion phenomena and status symbols: Contextualising the wardrobe of the so-called “former priests” of Palmyra

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### Palmyrene funerary sculpture and its context

Since the rediscovery of Palmyra in the 18th century, Palmyrene funerary portraits have made their way into collections and museums across the world.<sup>2</sup> It was in the 19th century that the large collections of Palmyrene funerary sculpture in museums in Europe came into existence, as these portraits were recognised as important comparative material to the Greek and Roman portraits which already had been collected eagerly.<sup>3</sup> The abundant Palmyrene funerary

sculpture became objects of study due to their significant and recognisable style as well as the fact that they had “well-documented” provenance, since they could be said to have come from graves in Palmyra. Very few, though, in fact hold exact provenances, since they were illegally excavated from numerous tombs, among these the underground tombs, which had not been explored archaeologically at all.<sup>4</sup>

Palmyrene portraits, which stem from the 1st century CE to the 3rd century CE, constitute the largest corpus of portraiture stemming from one single urban context and dating to a tight chronological framework. We know that Palmyra was devastated by the troops of Emperor Aurelian. This happened after Queen Zenobia had expanded Palmyra’s territory to extend as far as into south-east Turkey as well as into Egypt, having rebelled

- 1 I would like to thank the Carlsberg Foundation for generously financing the Palmyra Portrait Project in the period 2012–2015 and for prolonging the project from 2016 until the end of 2019. The research could not have been undertaken without the continuous support and interest of the foundation in the project. Furthermore, I would like to acknowledge the ERC Advanced Grant project “Lived Ancient Religion” of which I am co-PI. The funding was received under the 7th Framework Programme of the European Community under agreement no. 295555 (ERC-Advanced Grant “Lived Ancient Religion”). Finally, the support of the Danish National Research Foundation (grant number: 119) for the Centre of Excellence for Urban Network Evolutions has granted new research opportunities feeding into my research on Palmyra.
- 2 Wood 1753 for the earliest account of the rediscovery of Palmyra. Furthermore, see the recent publications by Sartre and Sartre-Fauriat on Palmyra and Zenobia for new overviews of research on the site and further references on the history of the site: Sartre-Fauriat and Sartre 2008; Sartre and Sartre-Fauriat 2014; Sartre and Sartre-Fauriat 2016.
- 3 For the collection histories of Ny Carlsberg Glyptotek, which holds the largest collection of Palmyrene funerary sculpture outside of Syria, see Hvidberg-Hansen and Ploug 1993. Most of the collection was bought in the years between 1883–1887

with the direct involvement of Carl Jacobsen, who saw these portraits as important comparative material for Roman-period portraiture. Further pieces were added in 1893 and later during the 1920s when Harald Ingholt excavated in Palmyra. For Ingholt’s excavations, see Raja and Sørensen 2015a. See also the earliest catalogue by Rabbi David Simonsen of the collection in Ny Carlsberg Glyptotek from 1889. For the collection history of the Louvre’s Palmyra collection, which for parts were bought a few years earlier than and contemporary with the collection at Ny Carlsberg Glyptotek, see Dentzer-Feydy and Teixidor 1993. Furthermore, the somewhat smaller collection at the British Museum was bought around the same time and can be researched through the museum’s online database: [https://www.britishmuseum.org/research/collection\\_online/search.aspx](https://www.britishmuseum.org/research/collection_online/search.aspx).

- 4 Østrup 1894, 90–91, describes some of the illegal excavations and the vandalism already taking place in Palmyra when he visited the site in 1893.

against the Romans, who struck back promptly.<sup>5</sup> Since 2012, all available Palmyrene funerary sculpture has been collected, registered, described and analysed within the framework of the Palmyra Portrait Project based at Aarhus University, Denmark. The corpus at present holds more than 3,000 portraits.<sup>6</sup> The corpus makes up the largest group of representations of individuals stemming from one place in the Roman world. It gives us the opportunity to study issues of identity, trends and societal values, among these dress codes in antiquity. Distinct types of portraits within the corpus, which all need to be seen within the wider context of the graves, can be identified. Men, women and children were portrayed in the graves. Some of the graves could hold more than 400 burials and made up large portrait galleries of Palmyrene families over generations.<sup>7</sup> The representations of the Palmyrene priests deserve particular attention, since these make up almost 20 percent of all male representations in the corpus and about 10 percent of all Palmyrene funerary representations in total. There are about 300 representations of these distinct priests. This is quite significant, since professions were not usually represented in the funerary sculpture, where emphasis was put on the family relations and the genealogy of the family from which the deceased came.<sup>8</sup> Among the group of priestly representations, there is a group of so-called “former priests”. These are signified as such in scholarship, since they do not carry the priestly dress or attributes, but are depicted with the priestly headgear, the so-called “modius” next to them. Until now, these have been interpreted as men who had been priests. However, I have recently argued that they were indeed priests, since priesthoods in Palmyra were held within families of a

certain social standing, and since these priesthoods were not professions but rather status positions.<sup>9</sup> These men were depicted, I argue, while not acting as priests. This allowed them to combine the best of both worlds, depicting the priestly headgear together with lavishly adorned textiles and elaborate hairdos and beards. These representations, and in particular the variety of clothing they are wearing, will be addressed here in order to analyse the choices present within this significant group of representations.

### The context of the funerary sculptures

Palmyrene funerary portraiture came into being in the 1st century CE within a cultural sphere that long must have been in contact with the Hellenistic world.<sup>10</sup> The oasis, Palmyra, situated in the Syrian Desert, was a rich city that flourished due to its success in interregional trade. Along with other large cities, usually situated in the coastal regions, such as Antioch-on-the-Orontes and Berytus, it was one of the leading urban trade centres of the East.<sup>11</sup> Due to its unique location, it did not have to compete for attention with other cities; its strategic position was in itself enough to give it an advantage. Although not a metropolis, Palmyra still became an interregional trade node.<sup>12</sup> Within this prosperous situation, which also carried with it an increase in the urbanisation of the site and the monumentalisation of the city-scape, the funerary portrait tradition came into being.

New burial customs were introduced in Palmyra in the 1st century CE. The monumental tower tombs, which over the centuries created an impressive skyline around the ancient site, were the first to be introduced as an alternative to the earlier more humble cist graves (Fig. 19.1).<sup>13</sup> Later the massive underground tombs, the *hypogaea*, were introduced (Fig. 19.2).<sup>14</sup> These could also hold several hundred burials

5 See Hartmann 2016 for an account of the events of the 3rd century CE and further references. See Sartre 2016 for a recent contribution on Queen Zenobia and the reception of her in European art and literature.

6 See Kropp and Raja 2014 as well as Raja 2015 for an introduction to the project and its organisation and aims. See Kropp and Raja 2016 for a recent edited volume, which includes a string of contributions on Palmyra, its archaeology and history.

7 See Raja 2017a for considerations on these groups and in particular on the positioning of the priestly representations within the broader scheme of the typologies.

8 Raja 2016 as well as Raja 2017a deal with aspects of the group of priestly representations, among these priests shown in constellations with others on the *loculus* reliefs (only four examples known until now) as well as general considerations on priesthood in Palmyra. Raja 2016 attempts a methodological study of the priestly representations in multiple constellations in the *loculus* reliefs and situates these meagre four examples within the broader context of priestly representations.

9 Raja forthcoming.

10 See Raja 2017b for considerations on the Hellenistic influence on Palmyra, which in the end must remain speculative, since we do not have portrait material from Palmyra dating to that period. See also Schmidt-Colinet and Al-As'ad 2013 for the excavations which were aimed at finding Hellenistic phases in the city, but in the end explored Roman-period domestic houses.

11 Meyer, Seland and Anfinset 2016 for a recent collected volume with a set of contributions that deal with Palmyra's trade and hinterland.

12 Seland 2015 for a contribution and further references to the Palmyrene long-distance trade.

13 Henning 2013 is the most comprehensive treatment of this tomb type and also gives the relevant further references.

14 Sadurska and Bounni 1994 includes portraits from a number of in-situ grave situations, among these several *hypogaea*.





Figure 19.1. The tower tomb of Elahbel in 2008, Palmyra, Syria. Photo: Rubina Raja.



Figure 19.2. The restored entrance to the hypogeum of The Three Brothers in 2008, Palmyra, Syria. Photo: Rubina Raja.

and were often extended over centuries.<sup>15</sup> Parts of them could even be sold off to other families, or older burial niches could be taken out and new ones put in.<sup>16</sup> These graves were not spaces that were static, but spaces in which changes took place as would have been the case in the public sphere. Along with these funerary monuments, the so-called temple and house tombs were also introduced in the Palmyrene funerary landscape.<sup>17</sup> These grave types were smaller but lavish grave buildings reserved for the upper elite class of Palmyra.<sup>18</sup> The funerary portraiture seems to have come into existence as a result of the introduction of these grave monuments into the architectural landscape of the city and the need for new ways of commemorating the dead.

The large rooms in the tower tombs and the *hypogea* held numerous burial niches, placed in rows next to each other and with several shelves for bodies placed on top of each other; this allowed for individualisation of the single burial niche. Here the funerary sculpture, mostly a portrait bust carved on a rectangular limestone block, presented the perfect medium, which on the one hand



Figure 19.3. Loculus relief depicting a man. The relief is dated to 230–250 CE. Ny Carlsberg Glyptotek, Copenhagen, inv. no. IN1041. The inscription reads: “‘Autân son of, Lišamš (son of (?)), ‘Aušai (or: ‘Ausai)”. Courtesy of Ny Carlsberg Glyptotek, © The Palmyra Portrait Project.

<sup>15</sup> See for example Cussini 2016 for a contribution which deals with legal texts on Palmyrene graves underlining that these spaces were dynamic and underwent a fair amount of change over time.

<sup>16</sup> Cussini 2016.

<sup>17</sup> See Schmidt-Colinet 1992a on a publication of a temple tomb as well as further references.

<sup>18</sup> Raja and Sørensen 2015b for a newly published contribution on the tomb Qasr Abjad excavated by Harald Ingholt in 1928, which we consider to be a temple tomb. See also Gawlikowski 1970, 130–132 whose conclusion we follow, also based on the new evidence, which we have been able to include in our 2015 publication. See Parlasca 1989 for an interpretation of the tomb as a tower tomb.

closed off the so-called loculus niches and on the other hand represented the individual who was buried in the niche. These busts, which were more than just busts, since they included a representation of the individual until just above the navel, seem to have been a Palmyrene invention, which might even have given rise to the spread



Figure 19.4. Loculus relief with single representation of a woman. The relief is dated to 230–250 CE. The inscription reads: “[Ša] lma[t], daughter of, Taimê”. Ny Carlsberg Glyptotek, Copenhagen, inv. no. IN 1054. Courtesy of Ny Carlsberg Glyptotek, © The Palmyra Portrait Project.

of the portrait-relief bust to other places in the region of Greater Syria.<sup>19</sup>

On these loculus reliefs, the deceased was either depicted alone, as was the most common motif, or together with a number of family members. These could include parents, children, siblings, aunts, uncles, nieces and nephews (Figs. 19.3–19.6).<sup>20</sup> The loculus reliefs were placed together with other loculus reliefs, banqueting reliefs and later sarcophagi in the graves, and over time these spaces turned into portrait galleries of generations of extended families from Palmyra (Figs. 19.7–19.8).<sup>21</sup> Palmyrene societal structure and the place of the family within the community



Figure 19.5. Loculus relief depicting two young brothers. The relief is dated to 150–200 CE. National Museum of Damascus, Syria, inv. no. 15020. The inscription reads: “Moqimu, son of Haire, (son of) Akkaledi. Alas! He lived, 16 years. Belsur, son of Haire, (son of) Akkaledi. Alas! He lived, 19 years”. Courtesy of DAI Orient-Abteilung.



Figure 19.6. Loculus relief with representations of two men and a girl. The relief is dated to 160–170 CE. Ny Carlsberg Glyptotek, Copenhagen, inv. no. IN 1027. The inscription reads: “Yarhibôlê, son of Malê. Alas! Bêltâ, his daughter. Alas!” Courtesy of Ny Carlsberg Glyptotek, © The Palmyra Portrait Project.

went hand in hand with the commemoration modes in the graves. As far as we know, Palmyrene society consisted of a number of families or tribes, who would have interacted with each other in the public and religious sphere, but who

19 Raja 2015 for observations on this. See Raja 2017b for considerations on the “genese” of the funerary portraits.

20 See Raja 2017b on the significance of these various constellations.

21 See Sadurska and Bounni 1994 for several in-situ situations. However, one should be aware that no complete interior of a

tomb has been found. All in-situ situations only give partial insight into how the larger picture might have looked.





Figure 19.7. Detail of displayed portraits from the interior of the tower tomb of Elahbel in 2008, Palmyra, Syria. Photo: Rubina Raja.

seem to have had their own funerary spaces.<sup>22</sup> However, as mentioned above, parts of family tombs could be sold off to other families and extended in order to include new branches of the family.<sup>23</sup>

### Depictions of Palmyrene priests in Palmyra

Palmyrene portraiture can be divided into two categories: the public portraiture, of which very little has been handed

down to us, and the funerary portraiture, which is abundant.<sup>24</sup> The funerary representations can be subdivided into further categories. The two main categories are the so-called *loculus* reliefs and the later introduced sarcophagi. Within the *loculus* reliefs, there are sub-categories: *loculus* bust reliefs depicting single and multiple portraits, *stelae* reliefs showing one or more persons in under-life-size full figure (Fig. 19.9). Furthermore, the so-called banqueting reliefs also make up a distinct group of their own (Fig. 19.10). These existed both in the shape of a *loculus* slab, but could also be much larger and then displayed in *exedras* or larger niches in the graves.<sup>25</sup> The sarcophagi with adorned lids depicting banqueting scenes and boxes with representations of further individuals are ones which seem to display the most conservative and static motifs over time (Figs. 19.11–19.12). The lids consisted of a high relief, sometimes worked almost in the round, and could represent up to 13 individuals on the most elaborate scenes.<sup>26</sup> The sarcophagi boxes would display further portrait busts, which – when accompanied by inscriptions – tell us that these individuals also belonged to the family of the deceased.

Palmyrene funerary portraits were often accompanied by an inscription in the local Palmyrene-Aramaic dialect. This inscription would give the name of the deceased and potentially other individuals depicted. In some case, the inscription would also indicate the relationship between the various individuals.<sup>27</sup> Funerary inscriptions in Greek and Latin are rare, despite the fact that Palmyrene society was highly bilingual.<sup>28</sup> Epigraphy in the funerary sphere was dedicated to the local language and remained so throughout the centuries in which the funerary sculpture was produced. In the funerary sphere, the inscriptions furthermore focused exclusively on giving a picture of the family genealogy and sometimes the relationships between the depicted individuals. The offices held in life and practices in the public sphere did not seem to have played a role in the funerary sphere. Here the family and its importance took centre stage. Only in the case of the Palmyrene priests does this differ, and the representations

22 Kaizer 2002, 43–45 for an introduction to these tribes and the influence this has had on the discussions about the religious life of the city, also for further references.

23 See Cussini 2016 for considerations on this as well as further references. See also Cussini 1995, 233–250 as well as Cussini 1993 and Cussini 1996, as well as Yon 2013, 333–379 remain invaluable contributions to the research on legal texts in Palmyra, which also include texts from funerary situations.

24 Kropp and Raja 2014 and 2015 for introductions to the funerary and public sculpture.

25 See Krag and Raja 2016 for a contribution which is concerned with these categories in the case of representations of women and children.

26 These are also considered in Krag and Raja 2016.

27 See Hillers and Cussini 1996 as well as Yon 2013 for a number of these. All funerary inscriptions are recorded in the database of the Palmyra Portrait Project. Several of these remain unpublished and will be edited and published together with the corpus.

28 In the Palmyra Portrait Project Database, only five Latin inscriptions and 30 Greek inscriptions are recorded to have belonged to the funerary sculpture.



Figure 19.8. Detail from the interior of the underground tomb “Tomb of the three brothers” in 2008, Palmyra, Syria. Photo: Rubina Raja.

show depictions of men who held priesthoods and could therefore carry out sacrifices, as also indicated by the attributes they often hold in their hands, the pitcher and the incense bowl.

It is within the framework of these categories of funerary portraiture and its development that the Palmyrene priestly representations, including the so-called “former priests” must be situated. Palmyrene priestly representations make up a distinct group within the Palmyrene funerary portraiture. As mentioned above, almost 20 percent of the male representations are depicted as priests.<sup>29</sup> When compiling the evidence for priesthoods in Palmyra, it is these visual representations of priests from the funerary sphere, which as a group tell us most about priestly representations in Palmyra. A total of 289 portraits of Palmyrene priests are registered in the database of the Palmyra Portrait Project (Figs. 19.13–19.17).<sup>30</sup> These

priestly representations are spread across a total of 250 objects including loculus reliefs, some of which show banqueting scenes, as well as on sarcophagi, freestanding sculpture and ceiling decoration.<sup>31</sup> On top of this, there is a group of single heads, which for most parts must come from sarcophagi, but which have not yet been assigned to their group of origin with certainty.<sup>32</sup>

A steady increase in the production of the funerary reliefs can be detected until the production ceased when

29 In Raja 2016 an overview of the priestly depictions in terms of numbers has been published.

30 This number has increased slightly recently. However, this does not change the statistics in the slightest.

31 These are divided as follows: 87 priestly portraits displayed on 86 loculus reliefs; two priestly portraits displayed on two loculus stela reliefs; 10 banqueting reliefs displaying a total of 84 priests; 84 portraits of priests displayed on a total of 49 sarcophagi (a few complete, but most fragmented to some extent); three freestanding sculptures of priests; one ceiling decoration displaying two priestly representations as well as 10 loose objects, in total displaying 12 priestly portraits. The table has been published in Raja 2016, 131.

32 These include 99 heads, which have not been included into the detailed statistics yet due to the fact that they have not been assigned to a typological group. They have, however, been counted in the overall statistics.





Figure 19.9. Loculus relief with stele motif depicting a boy in under-life-size full figure. Ny Carlsberg Glyptotek, Copenhagen, inv. no. IN 1147. The relief carries an inscription which reads: "Alas! Nûrbêl, son of Taimai (son of (?)), Mattenai". Courtesy of Ny Carlsberg Glyptotek, © The Palmyra Portrait Project.

Palmyra was devastated by the Romans in 273 CE.<sup>33</sup> The production of the priestly representations follows the same pattern. One variation of the pattern within the priestly representations is the group of so-called "former priests". These display male figures in the ordinary Greek and Parthian clothing usually worn by men. They also have visible hair and often beards and are depicted with the priestly hat next to them usually displayed on a pedestal.<sup>34</sup>

33 Sadurska and Bounni 1994; Ingholt 1928 for overview of the chronology of Palmyrene funerary sculpture. See also Colledge 1976 which remains a standard work on Palmyrene art in general.

34 See Raja forthcoming for further interpretation of these representations, which I believe do depict priests but embody

This group, however, seems to be a fashion phenomenon restricted to the second half of the 2nd century CE and continuing into the 3rd century CE.

Loculus reliefs most often show only one individual. This was the prevailing commemoration type in the Palmyrene graves.<sup>35</sup> Only a total of 12 percent of the loculus reliefs carried multiple representations, showing the deceased together with family members, some alive, some also already deceased. In the case of the priests, only four examples out of 87 show priests in constellations (Figs. 19.15 and 19.18).<sup>36</sup> This sort of representational scheme indicates that priesthood in itself held a high societal status in Palmyra.<sup>37</sup> Priests did not necessarily need to underline their family pedigree. Furthermore, the rooms in the graves functioned as large portrait galleries of families, extended families and priests as well as other individuals who were at all times surrounded by family members, reinforcing the importance of the individual through the importance of the family.<sup>38</sup>

The case of the priestly representations is quite different within the group of sarcophagi. The lids of the sarcophagi could carry numerous full-figure representations of individuals. Up to 13 individuals could be represented in one scene. Some of these were almost sculpture in the round. Also on the boxes, several individuals could be depicted, most often in the shape of busts. Both on the lids and the boxes, priests were represented. In some constellations, up to five priests were represented within one family scene.<sup>39</sup> Sarcophagi would have been expensive to

a fashion phenomenon restricted to the period from the middle of the 2nd century CE into the 3rd century CE.

35 In the database, as of April 2016, a total of 1,023 single representations on loculus reliefs and 145 multiple representations were registered.

36 See Raja 2016 for further elaboration on this observation. All four reliefs are also published with photos in this article.

37 See Raja 2016 also for further references.

38 The situation within the graves is quite complex. The few in-situ situations we rely on, do not give a complete overview. From legal texts displayed on the entrance to underground graves, we learn that funerary portraits could be taken down and new ones put up. Older burials could also be taken out, and new extensions of underground graves were sometimes put into the place of earlier ones. Parts of graves could also be sold on to other families. For a collection of sources concerning these matters, see Raja 2017b, also for further references. See also the recent contribution by Cussini 2016, 42–52 for a number of examples concerning the extensions and selling of parts of graves.

39 See Raja 2017b for further considerations and references. For one example showing three priests on the lid and two on the matching box from the *Hypogaeum* of Yarhai, west exedra, Valley of the Tombs (west) see Tanabe 1986, 274–275, pl. 241–244; Cantineau 1938, 157, d; Amy and Seyrig 1936, 250, pl. XLVII, 1.



Figure 19.10. Banquet locus relief depicting a reclining priest and a seated woman. The relief is dated by an inscription to 146–147 CE. Ny Carlsberg Glyptotek, Copenhagen, inv. nos. IN 1160 and 1159. The inscription reads: “Malikū, son of Lišamš, son of Ḥannabēl ‘A‘abī, year (4)58. Šim‘ōn, son of Ḥairān, Firdūsī, his wife”. Courtesy of Ny Carlsberg Glyptotek, © The Palmyra Portrait Project.

produce. Therefore they would also have been reserved as a commemoration type for the wealthiest. These families might well have been the ones within which priesthoods were held.<sup>40</sup>

### The Palmyrene priestly headgear and terminological problems

One particular dress item belonging to the Palmyrene priestly outfit needs to be addressed in a bit more detail, namely the priestly hat. Priests in Palmyra are identified as such when shown with the round hat with a flat top on their heads. While the men, who wear the priestly hat, appear to have clean-shaven heads and this feature has come to signify priests in Palmyra as well, the men depicted with the priestly hat next to them all have hair and wear beards, apart from one. The priestly hat, although always shown in the same basic design, is depicted in a variety of patterns, more or less elaborate, and it has been speculated whether it might have been made of felt.<sup>41</sup> Priests in the Roman Near East usually wear conical hats, not hats with a flat

top.<sup>42</sup> The Palmyrene priests, however, wear the round flat hat, independently of whether they are depicted within Palmyra or outside.<sup>43</sup> The motif of the Palmyrene priestly hat seems to have drawn upon Hellenistic forerunners, like the one depicted on the Hellenistic-period stelae from Umm al-Ahmad on the Phoenician coast.<sup>44</sup> However, what the exact link between these traditions of wearing the round flat hat was, we cannot say. It remains certain, though, that men depicted with the hat in representations from Palmyra were priests. A few inscriptions, like the ones on the relief from the Sanctuary of Nebo, underline this.<sup>45</sup> Furthermore the inscriptions and representations on the numerous banqueting tesserae also underline that these men acted in priestly functions.<sup>46</sup> What we do not know, though, is what the priestly hat was in fact called, since no inscription or

40 84 sarcophagi out of 193 carry representations of priests.

41 Kaizer 2002, 235, also for further references.

42 See Drijvers 1976, 22 for the hat typology. Stucky 1973, 176; Balty 1996, 439 on the clothing of the Palmyrene priests.

43 There are two reliefs from Dura-Europos that show Palmyrene priests.

44 Drijvers 1976, 22.

45 Stucky 1973, 167–168. See Heyn 2008, 185 as well as Tanabe 1986, pl. 173 and Milik 1972, 164 for the inscription.

46 See the publication by Ingholt, Seyrig and Starcky 1955.





Figure 19.11. Complete sarcophagus from the hypogeum of the Bôlbarak family, Valley of the Tombs. Lid with two seated women, reclining priest and two standing individuals; box depicting three women and two men. The sarcophagus is dated by an inscription to 239 CE. Palmyra Museum, Palmyra, Syria, inv. nos. 1795/6644, 1796/6645. For the inscriptions see PAT 1526–1535. Ingholt Archive, Ny Carlsberg Glyptotek, Copenhagen, © The Palmyra Portrait Project.

literary source give us the name of this item.<sup>47</sup> The term “modius” has been used and was introduced based on the shape of the hat. Since it is round and flat, it was compared to the corn measure worn by Serapis, which indeed was called a “modius”.<sup>48</sup> There are no similarities between the “modius” of Serapis and the priestly hat worn by the Palmyrenes, which in fact justifies the term “modius” being used in the case of the Palmyrene priestly hat. By calling the hat a “modius”, we read a string of religiously loaded terms into the object.

The representations of the priestly hat in the funerary sculpture clearly indicate that these hats were made of strong textile and not out of thin metal, for example. They have

a variety of designs and can be depicted as being divided into several vertical fields, perhaps indicating separation of various fields of textile, which had been sewn together. They are often also crowned by wreaths, which seem to have been made of vegetal material or sometimes other textiles. Furthermore, they can carry a central medallion with a depiction of either a male person, a priest or some decorative element, such as a lozenge or a rosette. The priestly hats depicted next to the so-called “former priests” show the same degree of variation. They all differ from each other in their design, despite the fact that they follow the same basic design. There seems to have been an enormous amount of variety within the design range of these hats, which must have reflected how they really looked. It seems that although the priestly hat was recognisable and followed a certain pattern, there were many possibilities for adapting the design of the hat to one’s specific tastes and fashion of the time. The priestly hat could indeed be a

47 Kaizer 2002 labels the hat “modius”, which was followed by Raja 2016. This term is obviously completely incorrect.

48 Kaizer 2002, 235 also for further references.



Figure 19.12. Sarcophagus lid with a seated woman, two reclining priests and two standing individuals, a priest and a man. The sarcophagus is dated between 237–255 CE and originally came from the Hypogeum of Yarhai, west exedra, central triclinium, Valley of the Tombs. National Museum of Damascus, Syria. Ingholt Archive, Ny Carlsberg Glyptotek, Copenhagen, © The Palmyra Portrait Project.

sign of individuality, although the person depicted with it, also expressed a clear belonging to a certain group of men.

### The representations of the so-called former priests

There are 24 representations of what, in the literature, is usually termed former priests, since these make up a distinct group within the larger group of the priestly representations. These representations of “former priests” make up approximately eight percent of the priestly representations in the Palmyrene funerary sculpture in total.<sup>49</sup> While all other representations of Palmyrene priests in the funerary sculpture wear their headgear, the so-called “modius”, and seem to be clean shaven under this, the “former priests” are all depicted with the priestly headgear next to them and all have hair. Here it will be considered in which ways we might begin to understand these representations through, among other things, their clothing and attributes.

These 24 representations of so-called “former priests” are spread across different categories within the funerary sculpture, which are summarised here. One representation is a stela motif from the 3rd century CE on a loculus

relief. It represents two men in under-life-size full figure. A priestly hat is placed on a pedestal centrally on the relief (cat. no. 1). Eleven loculus reliefs carry depictions of “former priests” (cat. nos. 2–12). Five of these date to the 2nd century CE (cat. nos. 2–6). One dates to the late 2nd century CE or the early 3rd century CE (cat. no. 7). Another five date to the 3rd century CE (cat. no. 8–12). The priestly hat is in all these loculus reliefs placed on a pedestal. In ten of the cases, the hat is placed above and behind the right shoulder of the male person. Only in one case is it placed above and behind the left shoulder. All these representations are single loculus reliefs, meaning that none of the men are shown together with other family members. Although single representations were the most common ones in the loculus reliefs, there are indications that when a motif consequently appears only in single constellations, this usually carries an implicit meaning. Such a meaning might hold either typological importance or importance which goes beyond the motif itself.<sup>50</sup> In the case of the so-called former priests on the loculus reliefs with their priestly hat displayed next to them, we seem to have to do with a type of motif which would not have allowed for further representations of individuals, purely due to lack of space on the loculus slab. The priestly hat was so to say

49 These are published together in Raja forthcoming.

50 Raja 2016 on priests in constellations.





Figure 19.13. Loculus relief depicting a priest. The relief is dated to 150–200 CE. Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, Richmond, Virginia, inv. no. VMFA 2497. Ingholt Archive, Ny Carlsberg Glyptotek, Copenhagen, © The Palmyra Portrait Project.

the second representation and took up any available space in which another individual would otherwise have been placed. So whereas Palmyrene priests are usually shown alone and this was an underlining of their high status, the so-called “former priests” are shown alone as a consequence of the motif type where the priestly hat needed its own space within the loculus frame.

Five banqueting reliefs of the loculus type, which were all more or less the same size originally, show men with their priestly hats depicted next to them (cat. nos. 13–17). Four of these hats are displayed on pedestals (cat. nos. 13, 14, 15, 17), while one is being presented to the reclining male figure by another male figure (cat. no. 16). On three examples, the male figure is fully visible (cat. nos. 13, 15, 16). In these three cases, the men have elaborate coiffures, and in two cases, they are wearing a beard as well (cat. nos. 13 and 16). In four of the reliefs, the reclining male person is accompanied by a male individual standing at the foot of the *kline* (cat. nos. 14, 15, 16, 17). However, as noted above, only in one case does the standing individual present the hat to the reclining male person (cat. no. 16). The clothing, where visible, can clearly be distinguished



Figure 19.14. Loculus relief with single representation of a Palmyrene priest. The relief is dated to 230–250 CE. The inscription reads: “Alas! Mariōn, son of, ‘Elāhbēl’”. Ny Carlsberg Glyptotek, Copenhagen, inv. no. IN 1033. Courtesy of Ny Carlsberg Glyptotek, © The Palmyra Portrait Project.

as being the elaborate Parthian-style banqueting dress, which was richly decorated.<sup>51</sup> The banqueting clothes of Palmyrene men included a long-adorned tunic, most likely with woven patterns, which sometimes was worn over another thinner tunic. A cloak could also be worn over the long tunic. This would be fastened on the right shoulder with a brooch. A belt could be tied around the waist, and sometimes weapons were worn in the belt, such as swords or knives. The pants were long and baggy and often decorated. So were the boots, which appear to be soft, perhaps made of leather. In four of the banqueting reliefs, the banqueting madras is also visible and display adorned textiles as well (cat. nos. 13, 14, 15, 16).

In five sarcophagi scenes, priestly hats are depicted next to male figures. Three of these representations are found

51 The unpublished work of Curtis remains the standard work on the Parthian costume and also includes considerations on some of the Palmyrene material, Curtis 1988.



Figure 19.15. Double loculus relief depicting a Palmyrene priest and child standing behind his right shoulder. British Museum, London, inv. no. BM 125033. Ingholt Archive, Ny Carlsberg Glyptotek, Copenhagen, © The Palmyra Portrait Project.

on sarcophagi lids next to reclining male figures. In two cases, the hat is placed on a pedestal (cat. nos. 20 and 21). In one case, it is carried by an individual placed behind the reclining man (cat. no. 18). Two sarcophagi boxes display in total three priestly hats. One is the well-known example from the Palmyra Museum, which displays one priestly hat as well as a wreath (cat. no. 19).<sup>52</sup> The other one also stems from the Palmyra Museum and displays two male persons engaged in sacrifice, while their priestly hats are displayed on pedestals placed between them and behind the altar that is centrally located (cat. no. 22). The last example is a fragment of a person, who is holding a priestly hat (cat. no 23). This fragment stems from a sarcophagus lid.

Nine of the representations of the priestly hats with certainty carry small figural busts.<sup>53</sup> These are centrally placed on the front of the hat. Five of these busts display priestly male busts (cat. nos. 4, 5, 9, 11, 14), while four display the young male bust (cat. nos. 2, 6, 7, 13). On a



Figure 19.16. Loculus relief depicting a priest. The relief is dated to 50–150 CE. Museo di Scultura Antica Giovanni Barracco, Rome, inv. no. MB 250. The inscription reads: “Alas! Habbûla, son of Nesâ. Son of, Yarhibôl”. Ingholt Archive, Ny Carlsberg Glyptotek, Copenhagen, © The Palmyra Portrait Project.

further three objects, it is uncertain whether busts were placed on the priestly hats (cat. nos. 18, 19 and 22). The rest do not carry busts. This pattern seems to follow the general pattern observed in the priestly depictions where some of the priestly hats are depicted either with a priest or a young male person. The meaning of these busts has been discussed but remains somewhat unclear.<sup>54</sup>

Five objects date to the second half of the 2nd century CE (cat. nos. 2, 3, 4, 5, 6). One object dates to the late 2nd or early 3rd century CE (cat. no. 7). Seventeen objects date to the 3rd century CE (cat. nos. 1, 8–22) and one of these holds two representations (cat. no. 22). The majority of the representations date to the 3rd century CE, and there are no representations which can be dated to the 1st century CE. Based on the way in which these representations cluster date-wise, I suggest that they are expressions of a fashion phenomenon. This speaks against what has previously been suggested, namely that these were representations of

<sup>52</sup> Schmidt-Colinet 2007; 2009.

<sup>53</sup> See Ingholt 1928, as well as Stucky 1973 and Heyn 2008.

<sup>54</sup> See Stucky 1973 and Heyn 2008 who both do not arrive at firm conclusions.





Figure 19.17. Sarcophagus box stemming from complete sarcophagus. The sarcophagus lid (not depicted here) shows a seated woman, two reclining priests and two standing individuals, a priest and a man. The box is adorned with two priests and two women. The sarcophagus is dated between 237–255 CE. National Museum of Damascus, Damascus, Syria. Original context: Hypogeum of Yarḥai, west exedra, central triclinium, Valley of the Tombs. Ingholt Archive, Ny Carlsberg Glyptotek, Copenhagen, © The Palmyra Portrait Project.



Figure 19.18. Loculus relief depicting a Palmyrene priest and woman who is holding him. This is a typical mourning motif for mothers mourning their dead adult children. However, priests seen in constellations with other individuals are rare in the loculus reliefs. We only know of four. Current location of the piece is unknown. Ingholt Archive, Ny Carlsberg Glyptotek, Copenhagen, © The Palmyra Portrait Project.

a different category of priests, lower-ranking clergy or of former priests.<sup>55</sup>

It is implausible that Palmyrene priesthood would have been restructured profoundly in the 2nd century CE and even more surprising if such a restructuring, which would have included a downgrading of some priesthoods, would have been graspable in the visual evidence from the graves. For a Palmyrene elite male, it would not have been desirable to be represented as belonging to a lower clergy or being depicted as someone who did not act as a priest anymore. As I have argued elsewhere, priesthoods were held within Palmyrene elite families and were connected with a high societal status.

It is striking that these representations of men with the priestly hat displayed next to them are spread across all categories within the funerary sculpture, loculus reliefs—including single representations, one stele motif as well as banqueting reliefs. Sarcophagi representations also occur. That this motif, men displayed with their priestly hats next to them, only constitutes eight percent of all the priestly representations also underline that this was a representational choice, which had to move in stylistic trends rather than being an indication of a different kind of priesthood.

Eighteen of the 24 representations show the portrait or parts of the male person depicted next to the priestly hat (cat. nos. 2–13, 15–16, 19–20, 22). Five portraits are

<sup>55</sup> Ingholt 1935, 34–35 argues this.

missing (cat. nos. 1, 14, 17–18, 21). All the visible male portraits are carrying elaborate coiffures, and all but one are wearing a beard (cat. no. 15). One depiction, a banqueting relief, shows a reclining male together with a male person standing at the end of the *kline* (cat. no. 15). The priestly hat is placed on the pedestal behind the reclining man. Interestingly, the reclining man, to whom we must assume that the priestly hat belongs, is wearing a conical hat. This is the only representation showing a man with a priestly hat next to him, which also shows him wearing another kind of headgear. None of the other representations have this sort of double headgear.<sup>56</sup> In general, headgear worn by males in the funerary sculpture is rare, apart from the priestly representations. There are some cases of wreaths being worn by males. However, in general men are not represented with headgear.

In terms of the clothing, 14 of the men to whom the priestly hats belong are wearing the traditional Greek-style dress worn by most men in the funerary sculpture.<sup>57</sup> In the case of the banqueting reliefs and on the sarcophagi lids, the male representations are wearing the traditional Parthian-style clothes. In three cases, the clothing cannot be made out. However, in one of the cases, Parthian-style clothing may be assumed, since this is a fragment of a banqueting relief.

### Fashion phenomena and religious representation

It has been shown above in which ways the distinct group of male representations depicting Palmyrene priests and the group of the so-called “former priests” belong together. We can now with certainty dismiss the interpretation that these were former priests and conclude that these male representations with the priestly hat displayed next to them were expressions of a fashion phenomenon that had nothing to do with the actual structure of the religious life in Palmyra. These characteristic representations were choices made by and for individuals. This motif gave Palmyrene males, who also held a priesthood or were members of the priestly class, the possibility of being shown in other sorts of clothing than the priestly dress, which stayed fairly conservative over time and did not allow much expression of fashion trends. By taking off the priestly hat and displaying it next to the individual, a world of choices was opened. Now coiffures and beard fashions could be included into the representation, just as important clothing fashions – including the elaborately adorned textiles – could be depicted in the representations as well. Although the

motif was not extremely widespread, it still persisted from the second half of the 2nd century CE into the 3rd century CE and can be interpreted as a development to which the increasing wealth of Palmyra in this period gave rise. Furthermore, this motif and the variety in the details, which these objects show, underline that clothing fashions, hair and beard trends, as well as the display of the banqueting couches and their decorated mattresses, were elements, which interested Palmyrene men. They were also impacted by the luxuries that wealth and choice brought with it, while Palmyra was still the Pearl of the Desert.

### Catalogue of items registered in the Palmyra Portrait Project Database displaying priestly hats next to male persons

#### Catalogue number: 1 (Fig. 19.19)

Stele with a man and priest

*Date:* 230–250 CE

*Measurements (in cm):* min. h: 55; max. h: 56; w: 47; d: 15; d. (field): 8.5

*Location:* Ny Carlsberg Glyptotek, Copenhagen, Denmark

*Inventory Number:* IN 1024

*PS Number:* 303

*Inscription:* CIS: 4322 PAT: 0697

*Inscription reads:*

Alas! Yarḥai, son of Yarḥa, son of Yarḥai, Yedî'bêl, Ya'ût.

*References:* Chabot 1922, 119, no. 5, pl. XXVIII, 17; Ingholt 1928, 135; Colledge 1976, 67, 243, pl. 35; Hvidberg-Hansen and Ploug 1993, 156–157, no. 126; Ploug 1995, 255–257, no. 126.

#### Catalogue number: 2

Locus relief with a male displayed next to a priestly hat

*Date:* 150–200 CE

*Measurements (in cm):* max. h: 27; w: 42

*Location:* Palmyra Museum, Palmyra, Syria

*Inventory Number:* B 8522/2321

*PS Number:* –

*References:* Colledge 1976, 251; Gawlikowski 1987, 291, no. 9; Charles-Gaffiot *et al.* 2001, 271, 347, no. 163.

#### Catalogue number: 3

Locus relief with a male displayed next to a priestly hat

*Date:* 150–200 CE

*Location:* Directorate-General of Antiquities and Museums, Damascus, Syria (04/08/2014)

*PS Number:* –

*References:* <http://www.dgam.gov.sy/index.php?d=239&id=1206>, consulted 03/09/2017.

<sup>56</sup> Except if we count cat. no. 8, which, however – as mentioned above, might not depict a Palmyrene priest.

<sup>57</sup> Kropp and Raja 2014 and Kropp and Raja 2015 for further references.





Figure 19.19. Loculus relief of the stele-motif type depicting two men and a priestly hat placed on the pedestal centrally in the relief. Date: 230–250 CE. Ny Carlsberg Glyptotek, Copenhagen, inv. no. IN 1024. Courtesy of Ny Carlsberg Glyptotek, Copenhagen, Photo: Ana Cecilia Gonzales.

#### Catalogue number: 4 (Fig. 19.20)

Loculus relief with a male displayed next to a priestly hat

Date: 150–200 CE

Location: Baron Poche, Private collection, Aleppo, Syria

PS Number: 230

Inscription: CIS: 4468 PAT: 0829

Inscription reads:

Ḥaggagu, son of 'Ogê, son of Iedî'b[êl]. Alas!

References: Ingholt 1928, 116; Colledge 1976, 250.

#### Catalogue number: 5

Loculus relief with a male displayed next to a priestly hat

Date: 150–200 CE

Measurements (in cm): max. h: 52; w: 44; d: 24

Location: Musée du Louvre, Paris, France

Inventory Number: AO 2398

PS Number: 221

Inscription: CIS: 4381 PAT: 0740

Inscription reads:

Yarḥai son of, Elahbêl. Alas!

References: Chabot 1922, 123, no. 20; Ingholt 1928, 115; Mackay 1949, 162, pl. LII,3; Colledge 1976,



Figure 19.20. Loculus relief depicting a man with the priestly hat situated behind his left shoulder on a pedestal. Date: 150–200 CE. Last known location: Baron Poche collection, Aleppo, Syria. Ingholt Archive, Ny Carlsberg Glyptotek, Copenhagen, © The Palmyra Portrait Project.

68–69, 250, pl. 79; Dentzer-Feydy and Teixidor 1993, 190, no. 191.

#### Catalogue number: 6 (Fig. 19.21)

Loculus relief with a male displayed next to a priestly hat

Date: 150–200 CE

Measurements (in cm): max. h: 50.5; w: 39.5

Location: State Hermitage Museum, St. Petersburg, Russia

Inventory Number: DV-4175

PS Number: 210

Inscription: PAT: 1767

Inscription reads:

Mezabbenâ, son of Jarhibôlâ, (son of) Refabôl (son of) Bogdan, Annâ his guardian, made this for him. Alas!

References: Ingholt 1928, 113; 1938, 131–132, pl. XLIX,1; Colledge 1976, 250.



Figure 19.21. Loculus relief with a male displayed next to a priestly hat. Date: 150–200 CE. Location: State Hermitage Museum, St. Petersburg, Russia, I.N. 171SM. © State Hermitage Museum, St. Petersburg. Photo: Leonard Kheifets.

### Catalogue number: 7 (Fig. 19.22)

Loculus relief with a male displayed next to a priestly hat

Date: 190–210 CE

Measurements (in cm): max. h: 55; w: 49; d: 22; d. (field): 15

Location: Ny Carlsberg Glyptotek, Copenhagen, Denmark

Inventory Number: IN 1043

PS Number: 293

Inscription: CIS: 4611 PAT: 0972

Inscription reads:

Alas!

References: Simonsen 1889, 21–22, pl. 13; Chabot 1922, 119, no. 23, pl. XXVII,4; Ingholt 1928, 123; Colledge 1976, 252–253; Hvidberg-Hansen and Ploug 1993, 114–115, no. 70; Ploug 1995, 174–176, no. 70.

### Catalogue number: 8

Loculus relief with a male displayed next to a priestly hat

Date: 175–225 CE



Figure 19.22. Loculus relief depicting a man and a priestly hat on a pedestal. Date: 150–200 CE. Location: Ny Carlsberg Glyptotek, Copenhagen, Denmark, IN 1043. Courtesy of Ny Carlsberg Glyptotek, Copenhagen, © The Palmyra Portrait Project.

Measurements (in cm): Max. H: 53

Location: Liebieghaus Skulpturen Sammlung, Frankfurt am Main, Germany

Inventory Number: 853

PS Number: 1469

Inscription reads (translated by Jean-Baptiste Yon):

... d/rj, ..., son of Našra', .. Alas!

References: Böhme and Schottroff 1979, 3–7, 37–38, taf. III; Parlasca 1985, 347–348, taf. 146, 3; 1995, 66–67, fig. 9; Rumscheid 2000, 214–215, kat. 247, taf. 68,1.

### Catalogue number: 9

Loculus relief with a male displayed next to a priestly hat

Date: 175–225 CE

Measurements (in cm): max. h: 52; w: 45; d: 15; d. (field): 1.8

Location: Palmyra Museum, Palmyra, Syria

Inventory Number: 1757/6581

PS Number: 1303

Context: Hypogeum of Šhalamallat, Valley of the Tombs

Inscription: PAT: 1834

Inscription reads:





Figure 19.23. Loculus relief depicting a man and a priestly hat displayed on a pedestal. Date: 200–273 CE. Location: British Museum, London, inv. no. BM 125346. Ingholt Archive, Ny Carlsberg Glyptotek, Copenhagen, © The Palmyra Portrait Project.

Alas! Ma'n son of, Wabhî.

References: Bounni and Saliby 1957, 48, pl. VI, 2; Bounni 1961–1962, 160–161, no. 20; Gawlikowski 1974, 23–24, no. 43; Tanabe 1986, 324, pl. 293; Sadurska and Bounni 1994, 160–161, cat. 211, fig. 113.

#### **Catalogue number: 10 (Fig. 19.23)**

Loculus relief with a male displayed next to a priestly hat

Date: 200–273 CE

Measurements (in cm): max. h: 49.53; w: 35.56; d: 32

Location: British Museum, London, England

Inventory Number: BM 125346

PS Number: 286

Inscription: CIS: 4337 PAT: 0695

Inscription reads:

Iarhibôlê, son of Rabêl, (son of) Šalmê. Alas!

References: Chabot 1922, no. 11; Ingholt 1928, 122–123; Colledge 1976, 69, 253, pl. 81.



Figure 19.24. Loculus relief of the banqueting-motif type with a reclining male and a priestly hat displayed on a pedestal. Date: 200–273 CE. Sold by Christie's, New York in 2002. Photo from auction catalogue.

#### **Catalogue number: 11**

Loculus relief with a male displayed next to a priestly hat

Date: 200–273 CE

Measurements (in cm): max. h: 60; w: 36

Location: University of Wyoming, American Heritage Center, Wyoming, Laramie, USA

Inventory Number: 1090–1033

PS Number: –

References: Albertson 2000, 163–165, fig. 2.

#### **Catalogue number: 12**

Loculus relief with a male displayed next to a priestly hat

Date: 239–273 CE

Measurements (in cm): max. h: 46; w: 37; d: 8

Location: Palmyra Museum, Palmyra, Syria

Inventory Number: 1794/6643

PS Number: –

Context: Hypogeum of the Bôlbarak family, central exedra, Valley of the Tombs

References: Sadurska and Bounni 1994, 146, cat. 194, fig. 129.

#### **Catalogue number: 13 (Fig. 19.24)**

Banquet relief with a reclining priest

Date: 200–273 CE

Measurements (in cm): max. h: 31.8; w: 41.3

Location: Christie's, New York, USA

PS Number: –

References: Christie's 2002, December 12th, New York, lot 303.



Figure 19.25. Loculus relief of the banqueting motif type showing parts of a reclining man, a standing male figure and a priestly hat displayed on a pedestal. Date: 200–273 CE. Location: Yale University Art Gallery, New Haven, Connecticut, inv. no. 1931.38. Courtesy of Yale University Art Gallery.

#### **Catalogue number: 14**

Banquet relief with a standing male and reclining priest

Date: 200–273 CE

Measurements (in cm): max. h: 40; w: 29; d: 14

Location: Palmyra Museum, Palmyra, Syria

Inventory Number: CD 27

PS Number: 1495

References: Michalowski 1966, 49–50, cat. 3, fig. 57; Tanabe 1986, 465, pl. 439.

#### **Catalogue number: 15 (Fig. 19.25)**

Banquet relief with a standing male and a reclining priest

Date: 200–273 CE

Measurements (in cm): min. h: 44; max. h: 52; w: 56; d: 8; d. (Field): 4

Location: Yale University Art Gallery, New Haven, Connecticut, USA

Inventory Number: 1931.38

PS Number: 1493

References: Ingholt 1954, no. 11; Vermeule 1964, 107.

#### **Catalogue number: 16**

Banquet relief with a standing male and a reclining priest

Date: 239–273 CE

Measurements (in cm): max. h: 42; w: 48; d: 5



Figure 19.28. Sarcophagus lid with a seated woman, reclining male and three standing individuals as well as a priestly hat displayed on a pedestal. The box depicts two female busts. Date: CE 230–273. Location: Palmyra Museum, Palmyra, Syria. Ingholt Archive, Ny Carlsberg Glyptotek, Copenhagen, © The Palmyra Portrait Project.

Location: Palmyra Museum, Palmyra, Syria

Inventory Number: 1793/6642

PS Number: –

Context: Hypogeum of the Bôlbarak family, main exedra, Valley of the Tombs

References: Tanabe 1986, 464, pl. 437; Sadurska and Bounni 1994, 145–146, cat. 193, fig. 253.

#### **Catalogue number: 17**

Banquet relief with a standing male and a reclining priest

Date: 200–273 CE

Location: Directorate-General of Antiquities and Museums, Damascus, Syria (30/03/2014)

PS Number: –

References: <http://www.dgam.gov.sy/index.php?d=239&id=1199>, consulted 03/09/2017.

#### **Catalogue number: 18 (Fig. 19.26)**

Sarcophagus lid with a seated woman, reclining priest and three standing individuals; box with two women

Date: 230–273 CE

Location: Palmyra Museum, Palmyra, Syria

PS Number: –

Context: Temple grave no. 186, Valley of the Tombs

References: Parlasca 1984, 290–291; abb. 7; Schmidt-Colinet 1992b, Taf. 73a; Wielgosz 1997, 71, pl. IV.1.



**Catalogue number: 19**

Sarcophagus with a reclining man, a standing individual and a horse; box with a priest and six men

*Date:* 200–273 CE

*Location:* Palmyra Museum, Palmyra, Syria

*Inventory Number:* B 2677/8983

*PS Number:* –

*References:* Rumscheid 2000, 223–224, cat. 272, Taf. 66.1; Kaizer 2002, 179, pl. IV; Schmidt-Colinet 2007, 271–276, Taf. 84–89; 2009, 223–227, abb. 1–8.

**Catalogue number: 20 (Fig. 19.11)**

Sarcophagus lid with two seated women, reclining priest and two standing individuals; box with three women and two men

*Date:* 239 CE

*Measurements (in cm):* max. h: 143; w: 199; d: 12; d. (field): 2

*Location:* Palmyra Museum, Palmyra, Syria

*Inventory Number:* 1795/6644, 1796/6645

*PS Number:* 1262

*Context:* Hypogeum of the Bôlbarak family, Valley of the Tombs

*Inscription:*

*Inscription reads:*

This image is of Bôlbarak, son of Moqîmû, Bôlbarak, the exedra, and the podium in front of it, in the month of Nîsan, year 550 (239).

T, daughter of Gaddâ, his mother.

'MTD' TH, daughter of, Bôlbarak, the wife of Bôlbarak.

Šalmat, daughter of, Bôrefâ, wife of, Bôlbarak.

Moqîmû, his son.

Šalmat, his daughter.

Busts on sarcophagus box:

Amatnanai, his daughter.

Bôlbarak, his son.

'T', his daughter.

Wahballat, his son.

*References:* Tanabe 1986, 424–426, pl. 393–395; Sadurska 1988, 16, abb. 1; 1994, 16, fig. 3; Sadurska 1995, 587–588, fig. 11; Sadurska and Bounni 1994, 146–148, cat. 195, fig. 247.

**Catalogue number: 21**

Sarcophagus lid with a seated woman, reclining priest and two standing individuals, a priest and a man

*Date:* 200–273 CE

*Measurements (in cm):* max. h: 117; w: 176

*Location:* Palmyra Museum, Palmyra, Syria

*PS Number:* –

*Context:* Temple grave no. 36, Valley of the Tombs

*References:* Schmidt-Colinet 1987, 241, abb. 20; Schmidt-Colinet 1992a, 148, cat. B 1; Schmidt-Colinet 1992b, Taf. 34.

**Catalogue number: 22**

Sarcophagus box with two priests, two women and two men

*Date:* 200–273 CE

*Location:* Palmyra Museum, Palmyra, Syria

*Inventory Number:* B 2723/9160

*PS Number:* –

*References:* Rumscheid 2000, 222–223, cat. 271, Taf. 65.1–3; Kaizer 2002, 180, pl. V–VI; Schmidt-Colinet 2007, 276–278, Taf. 90; 2009, 223–227, abb. 9–14.

**Catalogue number: 23**

Standing individual from a sarcophagus lid carrying a priestly hat

*Date:* 200–273 CE

*Location:* Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, Berlin, Germany

*Inventory Number:* VA 2209

*PS Number:* –

*References:* Wartke 1991, 87, cat. 18.

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## Women in Palmyrene rituals and religious practices

*Signe Krag*

Numerous elements are of a rather unique character in the ancient city of Palmyra, which is situated in present-day Syria. The degree of female participation and involvement in rituals and religious practices during the Roman era is one of these elements. So far, no evidence from the city (epigraphy, architecture or sculpture) has directly revealed the presence of priestesses. Thus, it appears that the sanctuaries devoted to different gods in the city of Palmyra only held male priestly offices, whereas women occupied other roles in connection with rituals and religious practices. Furthermore, when women are depicted performing or participating in rituals or religious events, they are portrayed unusually in sculptures from the sanctuaries in comparison with sculptures from other contexts in the city.

This article sets out to explore the appearance of women in Palmyra in connection with rituals and religious practices, with a focus on their dress.<sup>1</sup> The dress worn by women in connection with ritual or religious events may be a way of signalling their participation in specific events.<sup>2</sup> But how is clothing used in rituals, and are specific dress-codes connected to these activities? Furthermore, the different roles women held in the city when participating in rituals or religious events will be explained using the evidence available to us to shed more light on their ritualistic and religious positions. The archaeological material providing

an insight into female ritualistic or religious involvement consists of the so-called procession reliefs from sanctuaries, sacrificial reliefs, dedicatory reliefs and inscriptions, and a few funerary sculptures.

### Religious reliefs

In Palmyra, a small number of preserved religious reliefs depict Palmyrene women. Furthermore, small dedications with reliefs have been discovered in the city, which will be addressed later in this article. The preserved reliefs that include men are more numerous, underlining the large divide between the roles of men and women in religious activities in Palmyra.<sup>3</sup>

### Procession reliefs

Two reliefs depicting processions have been discovered in Palmyra.<sup>4</sup> From the Temple of Bêl, situated in the south-eastern part of the city, an architectural relief from the peristyle is preserved, dating to the first half of the 1st century CE (Fig. 20.1).<sup>5</sup> Both sides of the relief depict a

1 The data on the Palmyrene reliefs I address in this article is from the *Palmyra Portrait Project* database. The project is financed by the Carlsberg Foundation, Copenhagen, Denmark: <http://projects.au.dk/palmyraportrait/>.

2 On the use of dress in general, see Wild 1968; Wild 1985; Johns 1996; Pászókai-Szeőke 2000; Meskell and Joyce 2003, 10; Rothe 2009; Carroll 2001; Carroll 2010; Carroll 2012; Stewart 2010.

3 See for example Tanabe 1986, 90, pl. 45, 99, pl. 58, 165–169, pls. 132–136, 173, pl. 140, 203, pl. 170, 206, pl. 173.

4 Seyrig *et al.* 1975, 88–89, pl. 42; Colledge 1976, 36–37, figs. 13–15, pl. 20; Drijvers 1976, 36, pl. V; Tanabe 1986, 87–89, pls. 42–44, 189–190, pls. 155–156; Gawlikowski 1987, 314, no. 27; Parlasca 1987, 278, abb. 1; Charles Gaffiot *et al.* 2001, 341, no. 159; Finlayson 2013, 66, fig. 8, 68, fig. 4.

5 See Seyrig *et al.* 1975, 88–89, pl. 42; Colledge 1976, 36–37, figs. 13–15, pl. 20; Tanabe 1986, 87–89, pls. 42–44; Parlasca 1987, 278, abb. 1; Finlayson 2013, 66, fig. 8. On processional reliefs, also see Krag forthcoming, chapter 6.



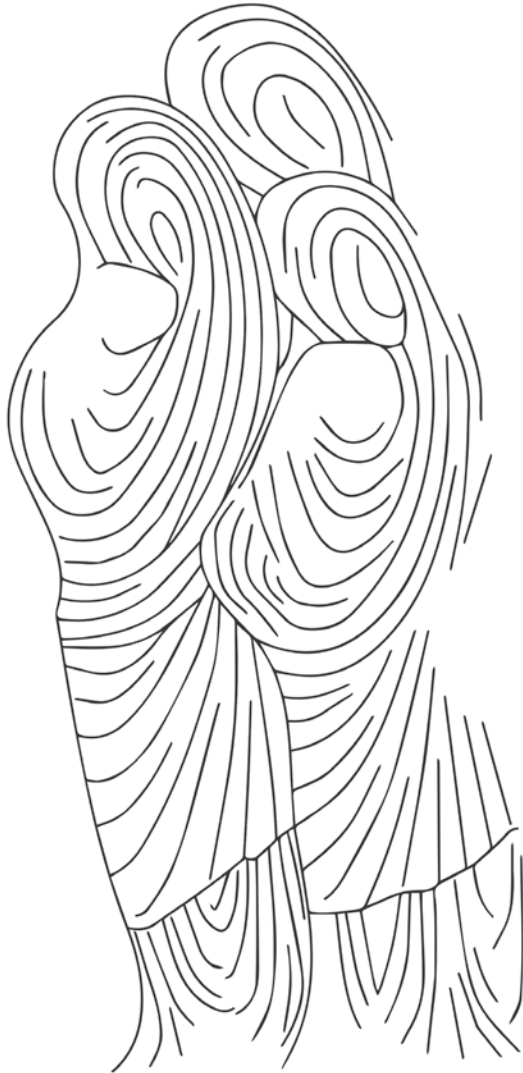


Figure 20.1. Veiled women from the temple of Bêl. Palmyra, located at the temple of Bêl. Illustration by author after Tanabe 1986, pl. 43.

religious scene, one of which includes a procession. Women completely draped in their clothing are depicted in front of and behind a central procession. They wear a tunic, while the rest of their bodies, including their heads and faces, are draped in a cloak. Their hands are raised to their heads. To the right, a camel is depicted carrying pillows and blankets on its back. A man is depicted in front of the camel leading it forward, and to his right stand four frontally portrayed men. Furthermore, a small calf is shown to the right of the man leading the camel. A person seems to be standing in front of the draped women on the left side of the relief, but the relief is damaged. On the other side of the beam, eight priests are approaching an altar in a sacrificial scene.

The other relief was found built into a wall close to the *cella* in the Temple of Allât situated in the north-western



Figure 20.2. Veiled women from the temple of Allât. Palmyra Museum, inv. B. 2310/8504. Illustration by author after Tanabe 1986, pl. 156.

part of the city.<sup>6</sup> The relief dates to the 1st century CE (Fig. 20.2).<sup>7</sup> It is not completely preserved, but women are rendered on one side. They are completely draped in a cloak and wear a tunic underneath. The draping of their clothing is similar to one observed in the procession relief from the temple of Bêl. The heads and left arms of the women are draped tightly by their cloaks. A large fold of the cloak falls towards the ground from the left arm. The gesture of raising the hands to the head is also depicted in this relief. However, in this relief the women's arms and heads are draped more firmly in the cloak, and curving folds are depicted across

<sup>6</sup> See Drijvers 1976, 36.

<sup>7</sup> Drijvers 1976, 36, pl. V; Tanabe 1986, 189–190, pls. 155–156; Gawlikowski 1987, 314, no. 37; Charles-Gaffiot *et al.* 2001, 341, no. 159; Finlayson 2013, 68, fig. 4.

heads and arms. Part of a camel is preserved in the relief to the right of the women, and it has blankets thrown across its back. The other side of the relief depicts a person seated in a chariot; probably a god.

The nature of the processions in the two reliefs has been widely discussed. It has been debated whether processional ceremonies were actually held in Palmyra; however, it is certain that the Palmyrene inhabitants knew of the processional act since they depicted themselves performing it the two reliefs<sup>8</sup> L. Dirven suggests that the camels originally carried a cult statue on their backs, and this would definitely be an argument for a religious procession in which an image of a god was carried through the city.<sup>9</sup> In the reliefs the camels are not completely preserved and a cult statue can no longer be inferred. These reliefs are often claimed to belong to a specific god or goddess. H. Seyrig argued that the arrival of Baalshamîn is depicted in the relief from the temple of Bêl; later he suggested that the foundation of the temple to Aršu was depicted in the relief.<sup>10</sup> Moreover, R. du Mesnil du Buisson interpreted the processional scene in the relief from the temple of Bêl to depict the foundation of a temple to Aršu.<sup>11</sup> Finally, D. Schlumberger argued that the foundation of the sanctuary of Bêl was depicted in the relief from the same sanctuary.<sup>12</sup> Furthermore, because one relief is connected to the temple of Allât, a goddess of Arabic origin, the reliefs are also interpreted as representations of Arabic religious events.<sup>13</sup> Arabic words and names can be encountered in epigraphy from Palmyra, where the various ethnic backgrounds and ways of living appear to have become strongly intertwined over time.<sup>14</sup> Thus, no agreement on how these reliefs should be interpreted has been reached. However, both reliefs do display religious processions which would have been held in the colonnaded streets in the city and led the processions past different temples.<sup>15</sup>

So far these are the only reliefs depicting processions that have been discovered in Palmyra, and they are the only examples which probably originated from sanctuaries. The draping of the clothing around head and body could be interpreted as practical sheltering against sandstorms. However, this seems unlikely because men in the same

scene in the relief from the temple of Bêl are not protected in a similar way. The similar dress of the women in the two reliefs suggests that when women participated in processional acts, there were certain restrictions on or expectations to the clothing they wore.<sup>16</sup> Thus, women dressed accordingly signalled their participation in a religious processional act. The clothing worn by women in these scenes could also be a construct caused by the religious space that the reliefs were located within. I suggest that because the reliefs were displayed within sanctuaries, restrictions existed on the portrayal of women, and the clothing worn by the women was not real depictions of how they would have looked in actual processions. But the women are still participating in processions whether real or constructed for the display within religious contexts. In the processions the women are involved in a public religious event, but on the reverse of the relief from the temple of Bêl women do not participate directly in the sacrificial acts which are carried out by eight priests. The camels carrying the potential cult statues are located close to the women in both reliefs and the women are further drawing attention to their female gender through the gesture of the raised arm.<sup>17</sup> Therefore it can be concluded that women could play a significant role in relation to the display of religious events, and visually they were very easy to recognise through their appearance.

### *Sacrificial reliefs*

Besides the processional reliefs, few reliefs depicting sacrificial scenes have also been preserved. In a relief found out of context at the agora located south-west of the theatre at the large colonnaded street, two women and one man are portrayed in a religious sacrificial act. The relief dates to the 1st century CE (Fig. 20.3).<sup>18</sup> The women are turned towards their left and stand behind a man. To the far left another man stands at an altar, engaged in a sacrificial act. Both women and the other man are bringing offerings towards him. The women wear tunics and cloaks, pulled over their heads and draped around their bodies. The women raise their right hands, holding attributes connected to the sacrificial act. In the relief, the women participate in a ritual; however, they are not directly involved in the sacrifice itself.

Two other reliefs are dated to the same period. One of them depicts a woman carrying a vessel and walking towards

8 Kaizer 2002, 204.

9 Dirven 1997, 110. In addition, see Finlayson 2013, 66.

10 Seyrig 1970, 77–112; Seyrig *et al.* 1975, 89.

11 Mesnil du Buisson 1962, 233.

12 Schlumberger 1971, 129–131.

13 Colledge 1976, 20; Gawlikowski 1990, 2651; Will 1992, 109–110; Dirven 1997, 109.

14 See Stark 1971; Millar 1993, 332–333; Maraqtan 1995, 90; Piersimoni 1995, 257–258.

15 See for example Gawlikowski 1973, 80–86; Gawlikowski 1990, 2651; Tubach 1995, 133–134; Dirven 1999, 85–86.

16 Finlayson 2013, 68.

17 See Heyn 2010, 636; Finlayson 2013, 67.

18 See Seyrig 1941, 2, pl. 1.1; Morehart 1956–1958, 56, no. 1, fig. 1; Colledge 1976, 38, fig. 26; Tanabe 1986, 16, pl. 135; Gawlikowski 1987, 308, abb. 30; Finlayson 2013, 65, fig. 2. On the sacrificial reliefs, also see Krag (forthcoming, chapter 6).

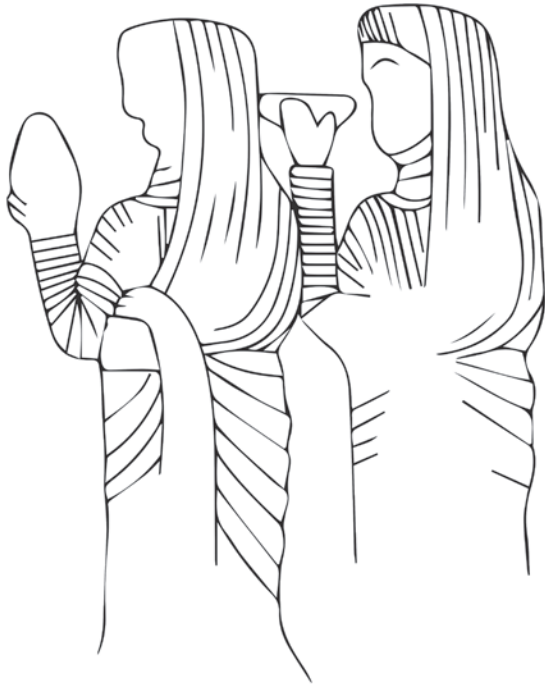


Figure 20.3. Women from sacrificial relief found in the agora. Palmyra Museum, inv. 1675. Illustration by author after Tanabe 1986, pl. 135.

a man who stands next to an altar.<sup>19</sup> She wears a cloak pulled over her head and draped around her body. A large fold falls from her left arm to the ground. Furthermore, underneath the cloak a tunic with vertical folds is visible. Similarly, the other relief depicts a woman wearing a cloak pulled over her head and draped around her body.<sup>20</sup> She wears a tunic with vertical folds underneath the cloak. She walks towards two men performing sacrifices at an altar to the left in the relief. She raises her right hand and her palm is turned outwards. The gesture appears in other religious contexts in the city and is also found in funerary iconography, particularly funerary portraits from the 1st and 2nd centuries CE, where it is almost exclusively performed by women.<sup>21</sup>

Sacrificial scenes are not exclusively encountered in the public displays in Palmyra. A sacrificial scene is

also illustrated on the lower part of a 3rd-century CE sarcophagus.<sup>22</sup> Centrally two men are performing sacrifices at an altar. They are not wearing priestly headgear; which instead is placed on shelves behind them. A woman stands next to each man. She wears a tunic and a cloak combined with the characteristic Palmyrene headgear, consisting of a veil, a turban and a decorated headband. The women are raising one arm to their chest, and the other arm is held across the lower torso. Next to the women servants are portrayed carrying offerings. The women are not carrying any offerings, but are accompanying the men performing the sacrificial acts. The women are thus quite distanced from the sacrificial performance.

From the sacrificial reliefs, it can be deduced that women did in fact participate in such events although they were not directly involved in the sacrificial acts. Instead, women participated by carrying the objects which were about to be sacrificed. The women's clothing is draped differently than observed in the processional reliefs, and it might be a rendering of the actual clothing worn by women in such situations. In the four reliefs, the men often wear so-called Parthian clothing. Sometimes they wear priestly headgear or it is located close to them.<sup>23</sup> Iconographically men and women are rendered differently: men usually stand out in the scenes wearing decorated clothing next to women wearing undecorated clothing. It can be observed that in processional and sacrificial scenes women wear different clothing than they do in funerary portraits. Here the women frequently wear a combination of the veil, turban and headband, women portrayed involved in religious acts do not.<sup>24</sup> Only on the lower part of the sarcophagus do women indeed wear this combination of headgear because the scene was displayed within funerary space. When Palmyrene women were participating in sacrifices they wore a tunic and a cloak pulled over their heads. I assume that this type of dress signalled their participating in a religious event.

## Religious dedications in the epigraphical evidence

### *Large dedications*

Although most of the following epigraphical evidence has not been discovered together with images of women, it might reveal how and the degree to which women participated in religious practices.

19 Sabeh 1952, 15–16, pl. I.1; Colledge 1976, 38, fig. 19; Finlayson 2013, 64, fig. 1.

20 Seyrig 1941, 32–33, fig. 2; Morehart 1956–1958, 56–57, no. 2, fig. 2; Colledge 1976, 38, fig. 20; Finlayson 2013, 64, fig. 1.

21 Colledge 1976, 38; Finlayson 2013, 64. This gesture is generally interpreted as apotropaic, and it has been pointed out that it commonly appears in the Semitic and Roman worlds (Cumont 1926, 70–72; Ingholt 1928, 53; Corbeill 2004, 23; Heyn 2010, 636–647). Female funerary portraits with the gesture, see e.g. Sadurska and Bounni 1994, 17–18, cat. 9, fig. 132, 32, cat. 31, fig. 134; Parlasca 1995, 59–62, fig. 4; Ploug 1995, 37–39, no. 2; Heyn 2010, app. 1, cat. 1–18.

22 See Kaizer 2002, pl. VI.

23 See Heyn 2008; Stauffer 2012.

24 For female funerary portraits, see Dentzer-Feydy and Teixidor 1993; Hvidberg-Hansen and Ploug 1993; Sadurska and Bounni 1994.

In the sanctuary of Baalshamîn, two inscriptions are dedicated by women.<sup>25</sup> The first states that two sisters and a third woman offered two columns to the god Baalshamîn.<sup>26</sup> Thus, women alone could offer donations to the gods. The second inscription informs us that a woman offered a column to the same god.<sup>27</sup> J.-B. Yon states that this woman mentions her own tribe as well as her husband's tribe in the dedication, and the latter were the guardians of the Baalshamîn sanctuary. He further argues that her husband's tribe legitimised her presence in the Baalshamîn sanctuary, and that she gained this legitimacy through her marriage, forming an alliance between these two tribes.<sup>28</sup> In this way, women could tap into the religious status and influence of their husbands and their families. To the west of the reverse side of the temple of Bêl an inscription has been discovered, recording that Thomallakhis donated 2500 denarii to the building of the bath of the gods Aglibôl and Malakbel.<sup>29</sup> An interesting aspect is the recording of the amount she donated for the building of the bath. This suggests that women could dispose of their own fortune and could pay for the construction of buildings dedicated to the gods. This is further supported by the previously mentioned female dedications from the Baalshamîn sanctuary. Yon argues that Thomallakhis was probably the last remaining member of her tribe and had inherited her fortune from her father.<sup>30</sup>

### Small dedications

Many altars and other small public dedications have been discovered in Palmyra and its surrounding territory. A large number of the altars were dedicated to or by women, and they constitute the bulk of the evidence for female civic and religious epigraphy.<sup>31</sup> Altars are most often found out of context, but large groupings have been found in sanctuaries and at the spring of Efqa.<sup>32</sup> The small dedications are most often dated to the late 2nd and 3rd centuries CE. During

these centuries a social change took place in Palmyra resulting in a shift from referring to the tribe in public inscriptions to referring to the family and the city.<sup>33</sup> This naturally brought about an increase in the importance of the household and the family as a social and economic entity.<sup>34</sup>

Several altars were dedicated to 'He whose name is blessed.', and many of these have been found at the spring of Efqa (Fig. 20.4).<sup>35</sup> The worship of 'He whose name is blessed.' was characterised by a more personal relationship between the deity and the worshippers.<sup>36</sup> Thus, small altars were frequently dedicated to the deity, rather than larger dedications.<sup>37</sup>

Women could dedicate altars to their husbands, fathers and sons.<sup>38</sup> Unlike the honorific sculptures, where women mentioned their brothers as beneficiaries, their sons were more frequently mentioned as such on the small altars.<sup>39</sup> Altars could be dedicated to women as mothers, sisters, daughters and wives.<sup>40</sup> But they could also be dedicated by households including women in their roles as wives and mothers.<sup>41</sup>

Some of the smaller dedications depict women. A column drum with a relief was recovered south of the temple of Bêl.<sup>42</sup> It should probably be ascribed to a religious context. It dates to the 1st or 2nd century CE and was dedicated by a brother to his two sisters. The sisters are portrayed wearing tunics, cloaks, and veils. One of the sisters holds a wreath.<sup>43</sup> She might be holding an item to be sacrificed and thus is displayed in a ritual sacrificial act. The relief could possibly show a woman performing an act that was otherwise restricted to men. The women wear small, plain earrings, brooches, and bracelets. It is not common for women to wear jewellery in public monuments in Palmyra, whether in processional reliefs, sacrificial reliefs or honorific

25 Dunant 1971, 24–26, no. 10, 11; Hillers and Cussini 1996, PAT 0167, 0168; Cussini 2005, 29. On female dedications in general, see Krag forthcoming.

26 Dunant 1971, 24–25, no. 10; Hillers and Cussini 1996, PAT 0167; Cussini 2005, 29.

27 Dunant 1971, 25–26, no. 11; Dijkstra 1995, 118; Hillers and Cussini 1996, PAT 0168.

28 Yon 2002, 170. In addition, see Smith 2013, 92.

29 Ingholt 1936, 109, no. 11; 1974, 45; Gawlikowski 1974, 79.

30 Yon 2002, 168.

31 See al-Hassani and Starcky 1953, 160; al-Hassani and Starcky 1957, 98; Gawlikowski 1974, 57, no. 119, 59, no. 123. On smaller dedications, see Krag forthcoming.

32 See for example al-Hassani and Starcky 1953; al-Hassani and Starcky 1957; Tanabe 1986, 180–187, pls. 147–154.

33 Dijkstra 1995, 152. Smith 2013, 70.

34 Dijkstra 1995, 152.

35 Dalley 1995, 140. See Dalley 1995, 140; Kubiak 2013, 228; 2016.

36 Gawlikowski 1990, 2632; Dijkstra 1995, 153; Dirven 1999, 29.

37 Gawlikowski 1990, 2632; Dijkstra 1995, 153.

38 Al-Hassani and Starcky 1957, 98; Hillers and Cussini 1996, PAT 0413, PAT 1915.

39 Dijkstra 1995, 151.

40 See for example al-Hassani and Starcky 1957, 98; Gawlikowski 1987, 310; Hillers and Cussini 1996, PAT 0402, PAT 1658, PAT 1916.

41 See for example al-Hassani and Starcky 1953, 160; Hillers and Cussini 1996, PAT 1911. Krag forthcoming, chapter 6.

42 Ingholt 1936, 95, pl. XX; Hillers and Cussini 1996, PAT 1346.

43 Sadurska argues that it might be a calendar, but I believe it to be a wreath due to the shape, Sadurska 1983, 152.





Figure 20.4. Altar dedicated to 'He whose name is blessed.' Ny Carlsberg Glyptotek, Copenhagen, IN 1080. Photo: Ana Cecilia Gonzales. Courtesy of Ny Carlsberg Glyptotek.

sculpture.<sup>44</sup> In the Ny Carlsberg Glyptotek an altar dedicated to 'He whose name is blessed.' by a woman carries a relief of a woman and a child (Fig. 20.4).<sup>45</sup> According to the inscription, she asked the god to save the life of her son or grant her son a good life.<sup>46</sup> The woman and her son are portrayed frontally with raised arms. Both have their palms

turned outwards as was also seen in one of the previous sacrificial reliefs.<sup>47</sup>

The gesture is depicted on some Palmyrene altars: either individuals are performing the act or a set of hands with palms turned outwards are merely carved in relief.<sup>48</sup> Altars which include this gesture are only dedicated to 'He whose name is blessed.' In the relief with the woman and her son she wears a cloth draped around her head and over this a large veil is worn.<sup>49</sup> Moreover she wears a tunic and a cloak that is secured with a brooch on her left shoulder. In the relief the woman is performing a ritualistic prayer directed towards 'He whose name is blessed.' Thus, it can be deduced that on smaller dedications women wear clothing items similar to those worn as in funerary portraits. Along with this, the women in this type of religious display are wearing jewellery, which women otherwise do not wear in public display. I suggest that the smaller and more private nature of the dedications encouraged these types of portrayals of women which were otherwise only found within funerary buildings.

The epigraphical evidence connected to ritual and religious practices in Palmyra implies that women were socially accepted in the religious spheres of the city and took an active part in religious life. A few women were benefactors and dedicated architectural elements or entire buildings to the gods, which underlines their significance in the religious life of Palmyra. These women could act individually in religious public affairs without male relatives, although it occurred only rarely. In the 2nd to 3rd century CE, many women began to dedicate small altars to 'He whose name is blessed' and a relatively large segment of the female population gained access to public religious display. It has not previously been noted that the depictions of women in relation to dedications of a small or more private character are similar to women in funerary portraits, both in relation to clothing and jewellery. It appears that a large variety of female apparel was depicted on small dedications and funerary portraits.

44 Female honorific sculpture, see for example Ingholt 1936, 124–125, pls. XXV, XXVI; Wielgosz 2000; 2010; Balty 2005.

45 Chabot 1922, pl. XXIII.4; Hvidberg-Hansen and Ploug 1993, 160, no. 129; Hillers and Cussini 1996, PAT 0420.

46 Translation of the inscription is from Hvidberg-Hansen and Ploug 1993, 160: "Blessed may his name be, in eternity, made by, [?]mallahâ and Hurmuz, (this altar), for the life of her son".

47 See Seyrig 1941, 32–33, fig. 2; Morehart 1956–1958, 56–57, no. 2, fig. 2; Colledge 1976, 38, fig. 20; Finlayson 2013, 64, fig. 1.

48 Ingholt 1936, 99. See Hillers and Cussini 1996, PAT 0065, 0354, 0360, 0371, 0374, 0420, 0435, 0439.

49 Hvidberg-Hansen and Ploug interpret the veil as an arcade revealing the location inside a sanctuary Hvidberg-Hansen and Ploug 1993, 160.

## Funerary sculpture

### Banquet scenes

Highly decorated textiles have been found in the Palmyrene graves, and similar patterns are found in some of the religious reliefs and funerary portraits (Fig. 20.5).<sup>50</sup> Evidence of a local textile industry has been revealed in Palmyra, such as *pithoi* with remains of dyes.<sup>51</sup> Furthermore, in the early funerary portraits, women are often holding a spindle and distaff and frequently wear elaborate textile headbands.<sup>52</sup> Thus, it appears that Palmyrene women were highly engaged in local textile production and included this feature in their funerary portraits.

In relation to the references to textile production in female funerary portraits the clear distinction between the decorated clothing worn by women from that worn by men is extremely interesting. In the banquet scenes from funerary buildings men can wear the highly elaborate so-called Parthian clothing and often the priestly headgear signalling their religious involvement.<sup>53</sup> However, women rarely wear clothing with decoration in these scenes, a characteristic also observed previously. The roles men and women had in these scenes were thus strongly separated through their clothing. Up until the 3rd century CE women are found seated at the feet of reclining men or they are standing in the background in banquet scenes. However, in the 3rd century CE some women are reclining alongside men.<sup>54</sup> Moreover, in these 3rd century CE scenes with reclining women, the cloaks of the women are sometimes draped like the ones worn by men in similar scenes.<sup>55</sup> The women are not directly involved in rituals, but the 3rd century CE banquet scenes with reclining women reveal changing roles in society where some women gained access to a stronger role in funerary display. The reclining posture of the women brought in connotations to banqueting iconography in which the visual borders between religious roles and positions became less stable.<sup>56</sup>



Figure 20.5. Banquet relief with seated woman, Ny Carlsberg Glyptotek, inv. no. IN 1159. Photo: Ana Cecilia Gonzales. Courtesy of Ny Carlsberg Glyptotek.

50 See Pfister 1934; Pfister 1937; Pfister 1940; Schmidt-Colinet and Stauffer 2000. Reliefs and portraits, see Tanabe 1986; Dentzer-Feydy and Teixidor 1993; Hvidberg-Hansen and Ploug 1993; Sadurska and Bounni 1994.

51 See Stauffer 1996, 425–427; Schmidt-Colinet and al-As'ad 2000, 71; Schmidt-Colinet and Stauffer 2000, 50–55.

52 Schmidt-Colinet and al-As'ad 2000, 71. Funerary portraits, see Dentzer-Feydy and Teixidor 1993; Hvidberg-Hansen and Ploug 1993; Sadurska and Bounni 1994. On portraits of women in Palmyra, see Krag forthcoming.

53 Banqueting scenes, see Dentzer-Feydy and Teixidor 1993; Hvidberg-Hansen and Ploug 1993; Sadurska and Bounni 1994.

54 See Abdul-Hak 1952, pl. II, 2; Schmidt-Colinet 1992, pl. 73b.

55 Stauffer 2012, 91.

56 On reclining women in Palmyra, see Krag forthcoming.

That they draw parallels to banqueting iconography is also evident in a few smaller reliefs in which women are reclining without men, albeit in domestic surroundings.<sup>57</sup> It can be deduced that the decorated female clothing was not used to signal ritual or religious participation and this was strongly emphasised in the banquet scenes as well as the public sacrificial and processional reliefs.<sup>58</sup>

### Mourning women

In a few funerary reliefs women are depicted as mourning, wearing only a cloak and headgear, and these reliefs appear

57 Michalowski 1962, 158–159, cat. 28, fig. 173; Tanabe 1986, 464, pl. 438; Ingholt Archive, PS 1056B. Also see Krag forthcoming, chapters 3–4.

58 See Krag forthcoming, chapter 3.

from the turn of the 1st century CE (Fig. 20.6).<sup>59</sup> From the inscriptions it can be inferred that these women are the mothers of the individual they are portrayed together with as well as one possible relief with a woman accompanying her brother.<sup>60</sup> Thus, the mourning gesture was used by women when they were mourning their children or brothers.<sup>61</sup> The women expose part of their chest by pulling back the cloak.<sup>62</sup> Furthermore, cuts are depicted on their chest. The cloak is draped in different ways in these reliefs, either it is draped to cover only the lower body of the women or it is draped across the torso, covering more of their body. Women used both their clothing and bodies to symbolise mourning and bereavement. Through the unique way of draping their cloak they signalled this ritual participation.

This was perhaps the dress worn when women were involved in mourning rituals? It is highly unlikely that Palmyrene women would expose their bodies in such a manner in public. In the funerary portraits of Palmyrene women they are most frequently wearing several items of clothing covering a larger part of their bodies, and it seems unlikely that they would wear this type of mourning dress in public. The fact that women are fully covered in the reliefs from sanctuaries further suggests that how women dressed in public was not unimportant.<sup>63</sup> However, it is possible that women could be wearing their mourning clothing during funerals, although the cloak would probably cover their entire body, and be used as a symbol of their act of mourning. The mourning mothers were certainly meant only to be seen within the funerary buildings.<sup>64</sup>



Figure 20.6. Relief with mourning mother accompanying her daughter, Ny Carlsberg Glyptotek, inv. no. IN 1025. Photo: Ana Cecilia Gonzales. Courtesy of Ny Carlsberg Glyptotek.

- <sup>59</sup> See Ingholt 1928, 108–111, PS 164, 119–129, PS 252, 132–133, PS 378, PS 382, 145, PS 468; Ingholt 1934, 40–42, pl. X.1; Abdul-Hak 1952, 235–237, no. 21; Starcky 1955, 41–42, pl. XIX, 1; Sotheby's July 1st, 1963, no. 37; Wartke 1991, 72–73, cat. no. 2; Hvidberg-Hansen and Ploug 1993, 76, no. 31, 132, no. 86; Pasinli 2001, cat. 217; Heyn 2010, 646, app. 2, cat. no. 1–6; Ingholt Archive PS 767, PS 937, one of the reliefs is now in the National Museum in Damascus and has the Ingholt number PS 939.
- <sup>60</sup> Ingholt 1934, 40–42, pl. X.1; Starcky 1955, 41–42, pl. XIX, 1; Wartke 1991, 72–73, cat. no. 2; Hvidberg-Hansen and Ploug 1993, 76, no. 31; Heyn 2010, app. 2, no. 1, 5, 6. Krag and Raja 2016, 149–153, 157–158. On mourning women, see Krag forthcoming, chapter 4.
- <sup>61</sup> Two portraits are preserved without epigraphy, Hvidberg-Hansen and Ploug 1993, 76, no. 31; Ingholt Archive, PS 767, and one portrait is individual, Abdul-Hak 1952, 235–237, no. 21.
- <sup>62</sup> Carved breast, see Abdul-Hak 1952, 235–237, no. 21; Starcky 1955, 41–42, pl. XIX, 1; Hvidberg-Hansen and Ploug 1993, 132, no. 86; Heyn 2010, app. 2, cat. 6.
- <sup>63</sup> Seyrig *et al.* 1975, 88–89; Drijvers 1976, 36; 1987, pl. V.
- <sup>64</sup> See also Krag 2015, 115–116.

## Conclusion

The roles of women in iconographic and epigraphic sources are very different from the religious roles of men. Women participate in religious and ritual events, but they are not directly involved in sacrifices and they are not priestesses. It appears that the highly distinct clothing of women in the religious procession reliefs might have been imposed by restrictions caused by the religious space in which they were situated, and that the specific way of draping the clothing functioned as a method to signal religious participation. In sacrificial reliefs women wear a tunic combined with a cloak, and the full headgear only occurs on the lower part of a sarcophagus from a funerary building. Thus, when depicted in religious reliefs on display in civic and religious spheres, women wore only a tunic and a cloak and this was their religious clothing. Women are not depicted as being directly involved in sacrifices offered at an altar, although they could dedicate altars to the gods. The roles of women in religious events are much more subtle than the roles of men in such events. The specific combinations of clothing signalled their involvement in rituals, and were clearly different from clothing worn by women in funerary portraits.



Reliefs on small dedications depict women in similar clothing to that rendered in funerary portraits. I have argued that in these more private dedications women could be depicted in a wide variety of ways, as in the funerary portraits. Here jewellery is worn which is otherwise not depicted on public monuments. In only one funerary relief do women wear Palmyrene headgear: either full headgear – veil, turban and headband – or only a veil.

In banquet scenes women are often portrayed alongside men that are depicted as priests. However, through their clothing women are clearly differentiated from the men. Thus, effort was put into highlighting the difference between highly decorated female and male clothing. The funerary portraits with mourning women, in which their cloak is draped around the body leaving the chest exposed, are perhaps more an iconographical characteristic drawing attention to specific roles in funerary display than real ways of wearing clothing during mourning. But here the clothing is used to signal their roles as mourning mothers and their participation in mourning rituals.

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## Part IV

### Late Antiquity





## Textiles as gifts to God in Late Antiquity. Christian altar cloths as cultic objects

*Sean V. Leatherbury*

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In Late Antiquity (4th–7th century CE), the period during which the Roman Empire became predominantly Christian, churches, chapels, and domestic buildings filled up with textiles. While these fragile fabrics do not tend to survive the ravages of time, the climates of certain regions – especially Egypt – have preserved a number of fragments. Now kept and displayed in museum collections in Europe, Egypt, and North America, Late Antique textiles speak to the wide range of colours and imagery with which pagans, Christians, and others adorned their buildings and bodies: scenes of gods and goddesses, Dionysiac images of figures dancing and revelling, stories from the Old and New Testaments, and many others.<sup>1</sup> While it is often difficult to determine the original functions of textiles recovered from archaeological contexts, most extant examples appear to come from garments.<sup>2</sup> The remainder are either too fragmentary to place, or, in the case of the larger panels, appear to have functioned as wall hangings or curtains inside domestic or sacred interiors.<sup>3</sup>

However, another type of Late Antique textiles – that of altar cloths – has been comparatively understudied, partially because no extant textile has been identified as coming from an altar cloth.<sup>4</sup> Despite the apparent lack of any secure surviving Christian examples, it is possible to reconstruct their appearance and significance from literary and epigraphic evidence, as well as depictions in monumental art. Re-examining these textiles in their multiple contexts is essential, as they were not just practical pieces of cloth, but possessed important religious symbolism as cultic objects given to God. This paper, then, considers the cultic functions and meanings of early Christian altar cloths, which, though related to earlier Graeco-Roman traditions of dedicating textiles to deities, served a particular purpose within the new Christian context as coverings for the holy altar table.<sup>5</sup> After examining the materials and iconography of Late Antique altar cloths, I turn to the function of the textiles as gifts to God. Reading the votive inscriptions that

- 1 See Stauffer 1996; Rutschowskaya 1990. The dates of these textiles are sometimes difficult to determine, and as most lack secure archaeological contexts, they are dated based on style and weaving technique. Recent attempts to radiocarbon date Late Antique textiles have confirmed the early dates (4th–7th centuries CE) of some surviving examples: de Moor *et al.* 2004.
- 2 Dautermann Maguire 1999, 10–13. On the difficulty of determining the original functions of fragmentary textiles, see Davis 2008, 155–156.
- 3 Mathews 1971, 167–171; Bolman 2006. The most famous hanging with pagan or polytheistic iconography to survive

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is the magnificent Dionysus hanging in the Abegg-Stiftung in Riggisberg (Inv. no. 3100a), Flury-Lemberg *et al.* 1987; Török 2005, 233–236. The hanging has been carbon-dated to the 4th century, Flury-Lemberg 1988, 368.

- 4 Previous studies of altar cloths have focused on the later Byzantine and medieval periods, see Braun 1924, vol. 2, 9–132; Speck 1966; and most recently, Woodfin 2012 (though more focused on vestments). The earliest extant complete altar cloth that has been securely identified is dated to the 12th century, Laurent 1960; Theodoris 1963.
- 5 For example, the famous tradition of the goddess Athena's *peplos*, woven anew in Athens each year for her festival, Barber 1992; Håland 2004.



Figure 21.1. Mosaic of musicians, Mariamin, Syria, Hama Museum. Photo: Sean Leatherbury/Manar al-Athar.

have survived from these cloths, it becomes clear that they were regarded as powerful bearers of meaning in the sacred economy of the period. Within certain contexts, the textiles took on particular significances related to the gender of their patrons, allowing female donors to connect themselves intimately with the altar and, through it, the body of Christ. Finally, I examine briefly the ways in which these cloths took on additional potency through their connection to the relics of saints that were embedded in the altar, turning textiles into relics in their own right. By viewing Christian altar cloths in their multiple cultic contexts, we may see the similar sacred values that pagans and Christians assigned to their textiles, as well as the ways in which Christians developed a system of value for this new type of cloth that had to serve as both practical covering and holy metaphor.

### Decorating the altar

Before turning to the role of altar cloths as gifts in Late Antiquity, it is necessary to consider the multiple functions and possible appearances of these textiles. Unlike the altars of Greek and Roman temples, which were typically left uncovered due to their function as platforms for messy activities such as animal sacrifice or the burning of other

offerings, Christian altars were covered by a cloth, as well as (occasionally) by a revetment “skin” made of a precious substance such as silver.<sup>6</sup> Late Antique Christians were of course not the first to use textiles to cover their tables: tablecloths (*mappa*) are recorded in Roman household inventories,<sup>7</sup> used in elite households to protect the stone or wood tables from food and drink and as surfaces on which diners could wipe their dirty hands.<sup>8</sup> Decorated tablecloths could also serve as adornments, as seen in the musicians mosaic from Mariamin in Syria, which depicts two wooden tables, one covered with a simple white cloth with a black fringe or border, and the other covered with a dark green cloth with a red-and-pink lattice design that frames rosettes and a red-and-gold chevron border (Fig. 21.1).<sup>9</sup>

6 For example, the silver altar revetment of the Sion Treasure, from Syria, now in Dumbarton Oaks in Washington, D.C., Mundell Mango 1992.

7 E.g. Cato, *Agr.* 10.3, see Faas and Whiteside 2003, 65.

8 E.g. Mart. *Epig.* 12.29.11.

9 Now in the Hama Museum, Dunbabin 1999, 171 fig. 178; Kiillerich 2010.

However, though Christian altar cloths did serve a practical function, protecting the altar table and providing a clean base for the bread and wine offerings of the Eucharist, as well as a decorative one, these textiles had a particular set of meanings within their new cultic contexts. By covering the altar, the clergy were able to protect as well as to control visual access to the precious altar table, which typically contained saintly relics embedded within or below it.<sup>10</sup> But in addition to controlling access, the altar cloth also had a symbolic function within its Christian context. As the altar itself was seen to parallel the tomb (sepulchre) of Christ, its cloth covering evoked the memory of Christ's burial shroud, rendering the textile a powerful image (*eikon*) of the divine.<sup>11</sup> Because of the perceived connection between altar cloth and holy shroud, the clergy attempted to regulate the materials and appearances of the cloths. Our earliest evidence of such a regulation dates to the 4th century CE, when, at the Council of Nicaea in 325, the bishop (Pope) of Rome, Silvester, decreed that "the sacrifice of the altar should not be celebrated in silk or in dyed cloth, but only in naturally produced linen, just as the body of our Lord Jesus Christ was buried in a fine linen shroud."<sup>12</sup> For Christians in the 4th century, the pure white linen specified by Silvester would have been seen as a sign of holy purity, setting up for worshippers a potent contrast between the white-covered altars of Christian churches and the altars of Roman temples, dyed red with the blood of "bulls and goats" (Hebrews 9.13).<sup>13</sup>

As with many of the definitions (*horoi*) issued by the gathering at Nicaea, the "rule" in fact indicates that in the 4th century different clerics were celebrating mass on altars covered in different ways, including with expensive silk or colorfully dyed textiles. The linen to produce these new standard-issue altar cloths perhaps came from Egypt or the Levant: as the *Life* of Silvester himself records, during his tenure as bishop, the newly-Christian emperor Constantine donated rich properties in Egypt and Lebanon to the church, which produced linen as well as spices such as pepper and

saffron.<sup>14</sup> As with other *horoi*, we know that implementation of ecclesiastical restrictions was a problem, even for the regulation of textiles: for example, another *horos* issued at Nicaea, directing deacons to cover their left arms with a mantle (*pallium*) made of wool and linen, had to be reissued almost one hundred years later by Pope Zosimus.<sup>15</sup>

In fact, these 4th-century regulations on the production of textiles to cover the altar also seem only to have been followed by certain dioceses. While there was a lack of consistent terms for these textiles, a number of different references can be discerned from textual sources, including church inventories.<sup>16</sup> Surviving papyrus inventories from Egypt testify to the existence of a range of different types of altar cloths in use. The inventory from a church at Ibion records both linen "tablecloths" for the altar (μαμπάρια λινᾶ τῆς τραπέζης) and wool ones (μαμπάρια ἐρεινᾶ),<sup>17</sup> while another slightly later inventory records an even more dizzying array of textiles, including purple, white and red linen coverings (σκέπασμα), painted (σκέπασμα ζωγραφητόν) and embroidered cloths, and "a small rosy linen covering with a black fringe" (σκέπασμα μικρὸν ὀθώνινον ἔχον μαῦρον ακρουλιον ῥοτόφυλλον).<sup>18</sup> Silk altar cloths also appear to have been in use, even in churches outside of urban centers.<sup>19</sup>

While no linen, silk or wool fragment to survive from the period can be securely identified as coming from an altar cloth, images of the cloths in artworks of the 5th and 6th centuries can provide a general sense of the appearance of these textiles. Though inventories do not provide us with this information, images of altar cloths indicate that it was common practice to layer two cloths on top of one another. In a lunette on the northern wall of the sanctuary of San Vitale in Ravenna, mosaics depict the Old Testament figures Abel and Melchisedek holding up offerings to God, whose

10 This practice of installing relics within or underneath the altar appears to have begun on a larger scale in the 4th century, Braun 1924, vol. 1, 608–645; Caseau 1999, 290–291.

11 Kuryluk 1991, 190; Coon 1997, 60–61.

12 *Liber Pontificalis* 34, trans. Davis 1989, 15. A similar regulation was issued in the 5th- or 6th-century Syriac version of the *Testamentum Domini nostri Jesu Christi*: "Let the altar have a veil of pure linen, because it is without spot," trans. Crowfoot 1938, 176. This same purity was desired by the adherents of different magical sects, who used undyed linen to cover their ritual tables, Cox Miller 1994, 121–122.

13 On early Christian rejection of animal sacrifice, see Ullucci 2012.

14 Including properties outside of Hermonthis in Egypt: *Book of Pontiffs* 34, trans. Davis 1989, 15. On linen production in Egypt, see Mayerson 1997.

15 *Liber Pontificalis* 34, 43, trans. Davis 1989, 15, 33.

16 On the lack of consistency, see Mathews 1971, 166. Speck 1966, 326–327, identifies the word σινδών ("fine [linen] cloth") as the earliest technical term used to designate the altar cloth, though it is not common in any of the inventories. Other early terms include ἔμβλημα (meaning an object put into or onto another), κάλυμμα ("veil"), and ὑπλωμα ("tablecloth"), Speck 1966, 331, 333–334. Later Byzantine sources use the terms εἰλητόν or ἐνδοτή: see Speck 1966; Johnstone 1967, 23–26. On Latin and Greek terminology generally, see Braun 1924, vol. 2, 9–21 (focused on the later Middle Ages).

17 The inventory dates to the 5th- or 6th-century: P. Grenfell 2.111, ed. and trans. Hunt and Edgar 1970, 432–434; see also Mundell Mango 1986, 263–264; Caseau 2007, 562–563.

18 Van Minnen 1991; Caseau 2007, 564–565.

19 See Fournet 2006.





Figure 21.2. Mosaic of Abel and Melchisedek, San Vitale, Ravenna, Italy. Photo: Sean V. Leatherbury

hand reaches down from the heavens: Abel, Cain's brother, offers up a lamb, while the Jewish priest-king Melchisedek holds up an elaborately stamped loaf of bread (Fig. 21.2).<sup>20</sup> Between the two figures stands a stone altar, its four legs peeking out from under its textile coverings, which include two cloths: on bottom, a deep purple-dyed cloth with golden decorations at the corners and a series of horizontal gold dots, and on top, a white fringed cloth with purple *gammadia* and a golden eight-pointed star made from two superimposed squares.<sup>21</sup> Based on contemporaneous textiles that survive from Egypt, these *gammadia*, named after their "G" shape (in Greek), were most likely woven separately and sewn

onto the fabric, or possibly embroidered.<sup>22</sup> A jewelled gold *kantharos* (urn) and two more loaves of bread sit on top of the covered table. Each figure in effect holds up a symbol of Christ: the Lamb of God, a symbolic image of Christ (John 1.29), and the Eucharistic bread, a stand-in for Christ that is ingested by the congregation. But the central object in the panel is the covered altar: echoing the royal colours worn by Melchisedek, the layered textiles with their gold accents glimmer in the light, their folds conveying the weight of the white textile on top. This image of the textile-covered stone altar contrasts with the mosaic directly opposite, in which the three angels appear to Abraham and Sarah and conduct an "angelic mass" on an uncovered wooden table that holds three simply decorated loaves of bread (Fig. 21.3).<sup>23</sup> This contrast is no accident, and emphasises the humility of the angelic performance of the liturgy against the kingly mass celebrated by Melchisedek, the latter of which would have been seen as the biblical predecessor to the mass celebrated on the altar of the sanctuary below.

Similar cloths appear in other contemporaneous depictions. In the wall mosaics of another church in Ravenna,

20 Deichmann 1958, taf. 314; Speck 1966, 328–329; Deliyannis 2010, 250. On the decorated loaves of bread in the mosaic, see Caseau 2012, 60–61.

21 A similarly layered altar cloth appears on the apse wall of Sant'Apollinare in Classe, also in Ravenna, and is possibly a 7th-century copy of the San Vitale depiction, Deliyannis 2010, 272–274. These *gammadia* designs feature elongated ends more typical of the decorative bands (*clavi*) found on tunics: on the difficulty of defining the term *clavus*, see Jørgensen 2011. The eight-pointed star was frequently perceived as a magical or apotropaic form, Dautermann Maguire 1999, 12. Examples of the eight-point star formed by two overlapping squares survive on tunics and as separate panels, including a 4th-century panel in the Coptic Museum in Cairo, inv. no. 4783, Gabra and Eaton-Krauss 2006, 177 no. 114.

22 Davis 2008, 155–165, who discusses woven and embroidered *clavi* and other textile ornaments that depict biblical scenes. On the tapestry-weave technique, see Maguire 1995; Thomas 2002.

23 An earlier version of the same scene, with the same wooden table, appears in the wall mosaics of Santa Maria Maggiore in Rome, Caseau 2012, 61–62.





Figure 21.3. Mosaic of Abraham and the Three Angels, San Vitale, Ravenna, Italy. Photo: Sean V. Leatherbury.

Sant'Apollinare Nuovo, the front of the white cloth that covers the table of the Last Supper is decorated with purple *gammadia* and a central purple square; while not an actual altar cloth, the textile should be seen as related due to its similar use-context in the image.<sup>24</sup> Another type of table, that depicted in front of Pontius Pilate during the trial of Christ in the 6th-century Rossano Gospels, is also decorated with a white fringed cloth, this one bearing the golden portrait busts of two emperors, echoing the double portraits that appear painted onto panels behind Pilate (Fig. 21.4).<sup>25</sup> On several silver patens (plates used for the Eucharistic liturgy) depicting the saints Peter and Paul celebrating the Communion of the Apostles, slightly different cloths appear covering the altar, either decorated all over with a floral pattern,<sup>26</sup> or with a central cross, medallions in the corners, and a patterned border.<sup>27</sup> While none of these cloths are the undecorated linen ones prescribed by the Council of

Nicaea, all of these examples do in fact show a (white?) top cloth, perhaps an indication that this regulation was followed in spirit, if not to the letter. Several fragments of textile (altar?) covers do survive in museum collections, including an example in the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York made of undyed linen that features two eight-point stars executed in a purplish-red wool thread, as well as a fringe (Fig. 21.5).<sup>28</sup>

While most surviving texts and images suggest that altar cloths were frequently adorned with simple embroidered patterns, if at all, the cloths of important shrines seem to have been of a different level of complexity, despite the early regulations discussed previously. In his *Book of the Pontiffs of the Church of Ravenna (Liber Pontificalis Ecclesiae Ravennatis)*, Andreas Agnellus describes four altar cloths (called *endothim*) donated in the mid-6th century by the bishop Maximian to churches in the city, including two cloths with figurative decoration: the first with images of his episcopal predecessors, and the second with scenes from the

24 Deliyannis 2010, 154–158. Similar tablecloths are visible in depictions of commemorative (*agape*) meals in the catacombs of Rome, though most of these are represented as undecorated white cloths, Deckers *et al.* 1987, 346–347, pl. 64b.

25 The same table and tablecloth appear twice, during the two scenes of the trial, see Loerke 1961.

26 As on the Riha Paten at Dumbarton Oaks (no. 24.5), dated to c. 577, Mundell Mango 1986, 165–170, no. 35.

27 As on the Stuma Paten in Istanbul, dated to 574–576/8, Mundell Mango 1986, 159–164, no. 164. A second silver paten, in the Ferrell Collection, depicts the same scene with

a similarly decorated altar cloth with a central cross, see Spier 2010, 258–261, no. 190.

28 Metropolitan Museum of Art, inv. no. 90.5.807, see Stauffer 1996, 25 ill., 47 no. 49. Another fragment in New York, Metropolitan Museum of Art, inv. no. 21.6.22, is decorated with a tapestry-woven *gammadion* and a medallion remarkably similar to that on the altar cloth of the San Vitale panel.





Figure 21.4. Trial of Christ, Rossano Gospels, Biblioteca Arcivescovile, Rossano, Italy. Photo: Scala/Art Resource, NY.

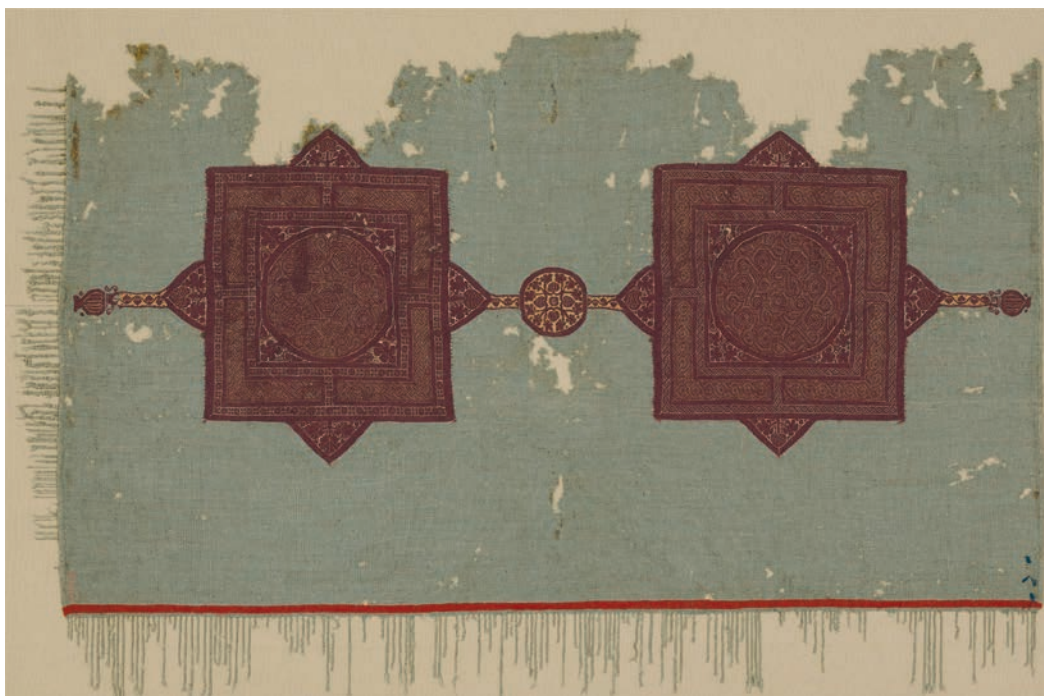


Figure 21.5. Fragment of a Cover with Geometric and Interlace Decoration, 5th century, Egypt. Plain weave and tapestry-weave, wool and linen, 64.9 × 97 cm. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Gift of George F. Baker, acc. no. 90.5.807. © The Metropolitan Museum of Art.

life of Christ and two portraits of Maximian himself.<sup>29</sup> These two decorated cloths would have made powerful visual statements to viewers, especially the first, which would have allowed Maximian to make an argument in images about the ecclesiastical hierarchy in the city and his place in it. While these textiles do not survive, a fragmentary border dated to the 8th century, the so-called Veil of Classe (*velo di Classe*) now in the Museo Nazionale in Ravenna, depicts a similar sequence of clipeate portraits of bishops, in this case of the bishops of Verona.<sup>30</sup>

Even more elaborate is the altar cloth (φᾶρος, a “large piece of cloth” or “mantle”) described by Paul the Silentiary in his lengthy *ekphrasis* (description) of the church of Hagia Sophia in Constantinople (modern Istanbul), performed on the occasion of the church’s second consecration in 562.<sup>31</sup>

Paul details poetically the appearance of the cloth, woven of multicolored silk threads, including purple-dyed ones, and featuring additional gold and silver embroidery.<sup>32</sup> On one side, likely the more visible side that would have hung over the front of the altar, Christ appears, flanked by the saints Peter and Paul, all of whom stand within an architectural setting.<sup>33</sup> Christ’s garments are purple and golden, the gold achieved by golden embroidery, “gold leaf ... wrapped round thread after the manner of a pipe or a reed, and so that it projects above the lovely cloth...”; while Peter and Paul wear silver garments.<sup>34</sup> On the hem of the cloth, a panel – perhaps a figural border – represents the deeds of the emperors, including Justinian and his predecessors: “here you may see hospitals for the sick, there sacred temples”. On other portions of the cloth, scenes from Christ’s life appear, “suffused with beauty”. At the end of his *ekphrasis* of this magnificent cloth, Paul goes on to mention yet other decorated cloths given by Justinian: “And upon other veils

29 Andreas Agnellus, *Liber Pontificalis Ecclesiae Ravennatis* 80, ed. Deliyannis 2006, 248. The other cloths are not described in detail, but one is mentioned as featuring pearls (*cum margaritis*). On these, see Braun 1924, vol. 2, 51; Mathews 1971, 166–167.

30 This colorfully embroidered border is very fragmentary, and it is unclear if it came from a liturgical vestment or an altar cloth, Cipolla 1897.

31 Paul. Silent. *Descr. S. Sophiae* 755–805, ed. Friedländer 1912, 248–250; trans. Mango 1972, 88–89. On this *ekphrasis*, see Whitby 1985; Macrides and Magdalino 1988. Many scholars,

including Johnstone 1967, 8, claimed in error that this passage refers to the curtains of the *ciborium*; but see Speck 1966, 331–333; Mathews 1971, 166–167.

32 On the woven-ness of the cloth, emphasised over and over again by Paul, see Thomas 2002, 40.

33 Paul. Silent. *Descr. S. Sophiae* 755–805, ed. Friedländer 1912, 248–250; trans. Mango 1972, 88–89.

34 On earlier uses of golden thread, see Gleba 2008.





Figure 21.6. Icon of the Virgin and Child, 500s, Egypt, Byzantine Period (6th century). Slit- and dovetailed-tapestry weave, wool, 178.7 × 110.5 cm. The Cleveland Museum of Art, Leonard C. Hanna, Jr. Fund 1967.144. © The Cleveland Museum of Art.

you may see the monarchs joined together, here by the hand of Mary, the Mother of God, there by that of Christ, and all is adorned with the sheen of golden thread.” These altar cloths may have been made by the same workshops as those purple-dyed and gold-embroidered cloths (*pallia*) presented by Justinian and his predecessor to churches in Rome.<sup>35</sup> Importantly, these images were not only decorative

35 *Liber Pontificalis* 54–55, 58, trans. Davis 1989, 48–50, 52. The word *pallium* can refer to the vestments of clergymen, but in this case it probably means “altar cloth”, see Braun 1924, vol. 2, 11–13. In the late 6th or early 7th century, Pope Gregory the Great also gave a purple-dyed cloth decorated with one hundred pounds of gold embroidery to St. Peter’s in Rome in order to cover the tomb of the saint, *Liber Pontificalis* 66, trans. Davis 1989, 61.

ones. Due to their focal positions within the church, the holy images of Christ, the Virgin and the saints on the cloths served as icons, allowing those worshippers who could see the cloths to channel their devotion to the figures depicted.<sup>36</sup>

While the images on the Hagia Sophia altar cloths would have been familiar to viewers in 6th-century Constantinople, and parallels in other media are extant, the altar cloths themselves do not survive.<sup>37</sup> However, a number of extant textiles, almost exclusively from Egypt, bear witness to the existence of similar images. Most commonly, these are decorative elements from garments, typically bands (*clavi*) or medallions (*orbiculi*) with narrative scenes, including Old Testament scenes such as the Sacrifice of Abraham, Jonah and the Whale, and others;<sup>38</sup> New Testament scenes from the life of Christ or less well-known narratives, such as that of Joseph, Mary’s husband;<sup>39</sup> or combinations of Old and New Testament scenes on the same textile, establishing typological parallels between the events of the two Testaments.<sup>40</sup> Decorated Christian garments seem to have been popular in the period, though some Church Fathers considered them to be blasphemous, arguing that images of Christ and Mary should not be worn to adorn the body.<sup>41</sup> Other surviving Christian textiles are more monumental in

36 In 814–815, during the period of debates over holy images in Byzantium known as Iconoclasm, the emperor Leo V publicly venerated an altar cloth with an image of Christ in Hagia Sophia in Constantinople on Christmas morning, then refused to venerate the same image during Epiphany (the Festival of Lights) due to his changed position, Noble 2009, 247–249. Brubaker and Haldon 2011, 371. In the later Byzantine period, a particular tradition developed of depicting the dead body of Christ on a textile called the *epitaphios* (so named because of the conceptual relationship between the altar table and Christ’s tomb, *taphos*; sometimes called the *aer*), which was processed through the church and placed on top of the Eucharist, see Johnstone 1967, 23–26; Woodfin 2012, 124–128.

37 Images of Christ flanked by Peter and Paul were common in early Christian iconography. On sarcophagi of the 5th and 6th centuries made in Asia Minor, Christ, Peter and Paul are typically represented as standing within an arcade: Koch 2000, 57–61, pls. 116, 118. Married couples united by Christ is an iconography more familiar from the Middle Byzantine period (especially on ivories), but Late Antique versions occur on 4th-century gold-glasses in Rome, e.g. Morey 1959, 397.

38 As on a wool border sewn onto a plain piece of undyed linen cloth, now in the Coptic Museum in Cairo, inv. no. 1740, Gabra and Eaton-Krauss 2006, 102 no. 68.

39 Fluck 2008; also Weitzmann 1979, 462–463 no. 413.

40 These include examples that combine Old and New Testament scenes, see Weitzmann 1979, 433–436, cats. 390–392.

41 Including Asterius of Amaseia, *Homily* 1, PG 40.165–168; trans. Mango 1997, 50–51; on the text, see Maguire 1990; Maguire 1995, 52; Thomas 2002.



scale and appear to have been hung in interiors, such as an extraordinary painted linen hanging with three registers of scenes from the Old Testament, carbon-dated to the later 4th century,<sup>42</sup> or the woven wool icon of the Virgin and Child enthroned in Cleveland (Fig. 21.6), produced by the technique known as tapestry-weave.<sup>43</sup> These hangings may have adorned the walls or templon screen of a church, or may instead have been kept in private domestic chapels within the houses of the elite.<sup>44</sup>

Strikingly, many of the hangings with explicitly Christian subjects also have architectural settings. The Cleveland icon of the Virgin and Child, on which the figures are depicted flanked by angels within a space defined by two marble columns with acanthus capitals, while the painted hanging with Christian scenes also is organised by a series of colonnades.<sup>45</sup> With their architectural schemata, these hangings recall Paul's description of a similarly architectural frame – a church building – that organised the scene of Christ, Peter and Paul on the altar cloth of Hagia Sophia. By setting biblical scenes within built architecture, these textiles construct a neat relationship between the heaven and the earth, encouraging the viewer to think of the church space in which (s)he stands as a heaven *on* earth.<sup>46</sup> On the Hagia Sophia altar cloth, the architectural images in fact were multiplied, depicting hospitals and churches, reminding the viewer that Justinian in fact built these buildings as further gifts to God.

### Giving cloths

As we have seen, altar cloths were frequently furnished to the church by devout congregants of different social statuses, including important bishops and rulers. Because of the importance of the altar cloth to the liturgy and its powerful Christian symbolism as an object conceptually linked to Christ's shroud, these textiles were seen as appropriate gifts to God. In fact, all of the altar cloths discussed so far – those in the Egyptian inventories, and the elaborate figural textiles described by Agnellus and Paul the Silentiary – were offerings to God made by the

faithful.<sup>47</sup> These textiles were suitable offerings in a cultic context because of their function, covering and protecting the holy altar, but as is evident from the literary sources, they were also recognised for their materials (silk, linen, wool), their colours (especially purple, red, or white), and their decoration, including simple geometric patterns, *clavi*, and elaborate figural scenes, all features that made them spiritually and materially valuable objects. The very materials of the offerings could indicate the status of their patrons: for example, imperial legislation regulated the use of purple-dyed silk, increasing its price and making it available only to the wealthiest citizens.<sup>48</sup> Some textiles were doubly referential as offerings, depicting other objects or actions offered by their patrons to God, including the hospitals and churches depicted on the altar cloth donated by Justinian to Hagia Sophia, the same architectural emphasis adopted by Procopius in his account of the same emperor's architectural projects, *On Buildings (De Aedificiis)*.<sup>49</sup>

Numerous references to the "gift-ability" of altar cloths survive in the literature of the period, testifying to their value as patronage gifts between elites and institutions. In the 4th century, Gregory of Nazianzus, a famous theologian and archbishop of Constantinople, lists altar cloths as one of the many gifts that he could have sought from the emperor, but which he did not, grouping the textiles with gold and official posts at court for his relatives.<sup>50</sup> These textiles could also act to authenticate promises made between human parties, as when, in 6th-century Gaul, an altar cloth was given as a material "pledge" or guarantee of an oath by Gunthram, King of Tours.<sup>51</sup>

Many of the cloths that we have looked at so far were explicitly made as votive offerings: for example, the purple

42 Török 2005, 279–281; Kötzsche 2004.

43 Now in the Cleveland Museum of Art, inv. no. 67.144, Weitzmann 1979, 532–533, no. 477; Rutschowskaya 2000, 222–225, 224 fig. 170. Other examples include a fragmentary wool and linen textile icon of the military saint Theodore, now in the Fogg Art Museum, Cambridge, Massachusetts, inv. no. 1939.112.1–2, Weitzmann 1979, 549–550 no. 494.

44 See Bolman 2006.

45 Kötzsche 2004, pl. 1a–b.

46 On this echo between earthly and heavenly architecture, see Lehmann 1945; Mathews 1982, who disagrees with Lehmann's analysis of the motif's development from pagan cosmological images; and recently, Schibille 2014.

47 On textiles as gifts generally in the period, also see Guillou 1979. On classical votive traditions, see Rouse 1902; Van Straten 1981; Satlow 2013; and on Late Antique votives, Witt 2006; Mathews 2009–2010; Vikan 2010.

48 *Cod. Theod.* 10.21.1–3, which ban the private production of purple-dyed silk, and set the punishment for breaking the law as exile or death; on purple dye generally, see Bridgeman 1987. In the 6th century, Justinian fixed silk prices within the empire in order to discourage illegal imports, while at the same time restricting silk garments to certain classes of citizens, Oikonomides 1986; Muthesius 2004; Muthesius 2008, 1–5. Linen production also appears to have been regulated by the state, as the Theodosian Code (in an edict of 374) banned the illegal sheltering of linen workers at Scythopolis (Beth Shean), *Cod. Theod.* 10.20.8. These regulations may have been difficult for the state to enforce, see Kingsley 2003, 124–125.

49 On this text, see Elsner 2007.

50 Gregory of Nazianzus, *De vita sua* 1880; see McLynn 2010, 237.

51 Gregory of Tours, *Historia Francorum* 5.14.

and gold altar cloths presented by the emperor Justin to churches in Rome in the 6th century were given in return for prayers answered.<sup>52</sup> Like other offerings within the sacred reciprocal economy, altar cloths could also be given for the future protection of God and the saints, as well as to implore God to remember and save the devout patrons. As had Roman offerings to the gods, the richly decorated altar cloths given by Maximian were actually inscribed with the prayers and wishes of their donor: one read “Magnify the Lord with me, who has lifted me out of the dunghill” (*Magnificate Dominum mecum, qui me de stercore exavit*); the other, “Lord, spare your people, and remember me, a sinner, whom you have lifted out of the dunghill in your kingdom” (*Parce, Domine, populo tuo, et memento mei peccatoris, quem de stercore exaltasti in regno tuo*).<sup>53</sup> Both of these inscriptions adapt the text of Psalm 113 (112).7, encouraging readers to glorify God and pray for salvation along with the bishop. Even more striking is the specific context of the cloths’ dedication: Agnellus reports that the first inscribed cloth was dedicated during Epiphany, in the western tradition the celebration of the visit of the Magi to the Christ-child, reminding us that feast days were key points in the liturgical year when offerings were made.<sup>54</sup>

Records of inscribed altar cloths also survive from the Greek east, including of an epigram from a Late Antique altar cloth: “On the table of the immaculate sacrifice I depict the passions of those sacrificed for Christ. For those whom I beg to have as protectors (πρὸς σκέπην) have I, Peter, put in the coverings (τοῖς σκεπάσμασιν) of this awful place (φρικτοῦ τόπου).”<sup>55</sup> Speaking in the first person, the textile describes its figural decoration—scenes of Christian martyrdom—and articulates the hope of its donor, Peter, that the saints will protect him just as the cloth protects the altar (playing on the verb σκεπάω, which could mean “cover” or “protect”).<sup>56</sup> While visual representations of martyrdom were not common in the Late Antique period, as martyred saints were usually depicted as triumphant

figures in the heavenly hierarchy, other depictions did exist, including bloody images of the torture and martyrdom of St. Euphemia, described in the late 4th or early 5th century by Asterios of Amaseia as painted onto the walls of the saint’s shrine at Chalcedon, outside of Constantinople.<sup>57</sup> By giving an altar cloth to the church, Peter engages in a *do-ut-des* relationship with the saints depicted, concealing the altar, described as the “awful place” (φρικτοῦ τόπου, a place that makes one “shudder” in fear) to evoke the pain and loss at Christ’s death on the cross on Golgotha, a death (and subsequent rebirth) that is reenacted in the Eucharistic liturgy. This type of reciprocal offering was so popular that, in the later medieval period, altar coverings were being given in such quantity that some churches began to disseminate the dimensions of their altars to ensure that the textiles would fit, including the famous pilgrimage Church of St. James at Compostela in Spain: “...if anyone should wish to send a covering or altar cloth for the Apostolic altar, he should make it nine palms in width and twenty-one in length.”<sup>58</sup>

While the instructions for the Santiago da Compostela altar date to the 12th century, the importance of the practical function of the cloth—that it cover the altar table appropriately—was evident in the Late Antique period as well. A striking tale in Gregory of Tours’ *Lives of the Fathers (Vitae Patrum)*, written in the 6th century, narrates the story of an altar cloth given as a votive offering that did *not* meet the conditions of the donor’s vow. In the *Life of St. Nicetius*, a peasant named Dado from a town near Tours in Gaul (modern France) agrees to donate two silver chalices to the local church in honour of the saint in return for his safety during a military campaign. But when the peasant presents a different votive offering than the one he had promised, he gets in trouble:

But when he [the peasant] did return he gave only one of them [the chalices], and in order to excuse the fact that he was keeping the other he gave a Sarmatian cloth to cover the altar of the Lord and its offerings. But the blessed man [St. Nicetius] appeared to him in a dream, and said to him “How long do you hesitate, and pretend to fulfill your vow? Go and give to the church the second chalice which you promised, lest both you and your family perish. As for the cloth, since it is thin, let it not be placed on the gifts of bread and wine on the altar, because it cannot sufficiently cover the mystery of the body and blood of Our Lord.” The

52 *Liber Pontificalis* 54–55, trans. Davis 1989, 48–50.

53 Andreas Agnellus, *Liber Pontificalis Ecclesiae Ravennatis* 80, ed. Deliyannis 2006, 236.

54 Agnellus, *Liber Pontificalis* 80, ed. Deliyannis 2006, 236. Maximian’s predecessor Victor also donated an altar cloth with a purple inscription recording the specific day of dedication: “Bishop Victor, servant of God, offered this ornament on the day of the Resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ, Year 5 of his bishopric” (*Victor episcopus, Dei famulus, hunc ornatum ob diem resurrectionis Domini nostril Yhesu Christi anno .V. ordinationis suae obtulit*), Agnellus, *Liber Pontificalis* 66, ed. Deliyannis 2006, 236.

55 *Anth. Graec.* 9.817, trans. Paton 1983, 439, adapted slightly by the author.

56 On “speaking” objects, which had a very long and ancient lineage, see Burzachechi 1962; Svenbro 1993.

57 On Asterios’ *ekphrasis* of the paintings, which (though it should not necessarily be taken at face value) is evidence for the translation of the bloody early Christian tales of martyrdom into a visual tradition, see Webb 2007; on “happier” images of martyrs, see Grig 2004.

58 This instruction is preserved in an anonymous 12th-century French pilgrim guide to the church, Davis-Weyer 1971, 153.

man was frightened, and hesitated no longer, and promptly fulfilled his vow.<sup>59</sup>

This story not only highlights some of the dangers of the strictly reciprocal late Roman system of votive dedication—if you fail to meet the full conditions of the vow, you must be prepared for an unpleasant dream-visit from the saint involved—but also reminds us of the importance of the *suitability* of votives for their intended tasks. The altar cloth is not found wanting because of its quality: it is made of “Sarmatian cloth”, probably a silk textile and/or an embroidered one.<sup>60</sup> Instead, the textile is less valuable to St. Nicetius because it is not the gift that was promised, the second silver chalice, and because it is too thin to fulfill its proper function on the altar. Interestingly, if we believe the saint, this cloth was meant not to cover the altar table, but to be placed on top of the offerings of bread and wine to protect them.<sup>61</sup>

Other altar cloths had gendered provenances that served to expand their ranges of cultic meaning. The engagement of female patrons with altar cloths is all the more striking because priests appear to have tried to keep women away from the altar in the early Christian period: for example, in the early 5th century, Pope Boniface I ordered that “no woman or nun should touch the consecrated pall [altar cloth] or wash it ... this should be done only by a minister...”<sup>62</sup> Of course, as we have already seen with the regulations on linen altar coverings, this restriction in fact indicates that women, including nuns, were in some churches responsible for cleaning and placing the altar cloth. But in the 5th century, some noblewomen went even further, giving their own personal robes to be used as altar coverings in Hagia Sophia during the celebration of the Eucharist. The earliest evidence of this practice appears in the context of the life of Olympias (d. 408), a devout woman who had become a deaconess after the death of her noble husband. Recognised as a saint by the Orthodox and Roman Catholic Churches today,

her piety and ascetic lifestyle led her to a close friendship with the important clergyman John Chrysostom (his last name literally meaning “golden-mouthed”), archbishop of Constantinople in the late 4th and early 5th centuries.<sup>63</sup> During his tenure as archbishop, Chrysostom accepted Olympias’ gift of her silk robe as a suitable covering for the altar of Hagia Sophia.<sup>64</sup> By using her fancy garment in this way, Olympias was responding to a call to humility that had been made by Chrysostom himself: “What is the use of providing the table with cloths embroidered with gold thread (χρυσόπαστα ἐπιβλήματα), and not providing Christ himself with the clothes he needs?”<sup>65</sup> Stressing a message of charity, the archbishop encouraged his congregation to give money and clothes to the poor rather than to the Church. While Olympias’ robe may well have been a golden cloth (χρυσόπαστα, literally “shot through” with gold), its reuse as an altar covering would surely have pleased Chrysostom as a sign of the patron’s devotion to asceticism, and served to link the body of the holy woman with the altar of the main church in the capital.

After Olympias had established this gift-giving practice as a particular mode of aristocratic female piety, a number of other women followed, including Pulcheria, daughter of the emperor Arcadius;<sup>66</sup> the empress Eudocia, wife of Theodisus II;<sup>67</sup> and the fabulously wealthy Melania the Younger.<sup>68</sup> All of these women were both extremely wealthy and known for their asceticism. Pulcheria gave both her own robe to serve as an altar cloth as well as a gold and jewelled altar, the latter of which was inscribed with her famous vow of virginity along its front edge for all to see.<sup>69</sup> Melania gave much of her vast wealth to the church during her lifetime, a process that began with her donation of her silk dresses to be converted into altar cloths, before she “cut up her other silks

59 Gregory of Tours, *Vitae Patrum* 8.11, trans. James 1988, 62–63.

60 It is unclear exactly what people Gregory means to indicate with the term “Sarmatians”, but the Romans generally regarded the “Sarmatians” as barbarians living in the lands around the northeastern shore of the Black Sea, May 2005. On silk and embroidered cloths excavated from Sarmatian graves, see Gleba 2008, 67.

61 On these cloths, first mentioned in the 5th century, see Pelliccia 1883, 162.

62 *Liber Pontificalis* 44, trans. Davis, 34; this prohibition on women touching the altar cloth was reaffirmed in the late 6th or early 7th century by the Council of Auxerre, Canons 36–37, CC 148A.269. Some churches appear to have had female altar servants: see Braun 1924, vol. 2, 24; Coon 1997, 133. Generally, see Muschiol 2004.

63 Holum 1989, 143–144; Elm 1994, 178–183. The *Life of Olympias* is another important source for her piety, see Clark 1979, 127–157.

64 Palladius, *Historia Lausiaca* 61.3, trans. Clarke 1918, 167–169; see also Brown 1988, 284.

65 John Chrysostom, *Homily on the Gospel of Matthew (Homily 50)*, PG 58.508–509. Chrysostom refers to votive gifts as *anathemata*, the same word that Greeks and Romans had used to refer to gifts to the gods.

66 Sozom. *Hist. eccl.* 9.1.4, PG 67.1593–1596.

67 Nau 1914, 117; see also Holum 1989.

68 Gerontius, *Vita Melaniae Iunioris* 19.

69 Scholars sometimes conflate the cloth and the altar table in their accounts. Sozomen narrates the tale of her donation of the jeweled altar with its inscription, Sozom. *Hist. eccl.* 9.1.4, PG 67.1593–1596. The tale of her robe is instead narrated by an anonymous 6th-century letter, *Ad Cosmam* 5–8, ed. and trans. Nau 1919, 363–364; on the text, see Holum 1989, 147–174; Constanas 2003, 50, 349.



and made them into different church ornaments.”<sup>70</sup> While it is unlikely that Melania herself cut up her silk garments and sewed them into curtains or hangings, the literary sources emphasise her personal participation in this conversion process to strengthen the image of her piety.<sup>71</sup> By the end of the 5th century, the church of Hagia Sophia must have been quite full with expensive silk garments that had been converted into altar coverings and curtains.

While scholars have not noticed the connection thus far, the act of converting garments into altar cloths seems also to have been practiced in the western provinces in the same period. In his 6th-century *History of the Franks*, Gregory of Tours relates a fascinating story about the use and potential abuse of expensive textiles in female monasteries in Gaul. As part of a tribunal in 589, Gregory himself interrogates the abbess of the Monastery of the Holy Cross at Poitiers, Leuobovera, regarding a number of charges made against her and her flock, including that she had “made a dress for her niece out of a silk altar cloth...”<sup>72</sup> Abbess Leuobovera is found innocent of the charge after her response, which provides much information about the economy of gifts given to the monastery by its noble patrons. As Gregory writes,

In answer to the charge about the altar cloth, she [Leuobovera] brought forward a nun of noble family [named Didimia] who had given her as a gift a silk robe she had received from her relatives, and she had cut off a part of this to do what she wished with it, and from the rest, which was sufficient, she had made a suitable cloth to adorn the altar, and she used the scraps left over from the altar cloth to trim her niece’s tunic with purple; and she said she gave this to her niece when she was serving in the monastery. All this was confirmed by Didimia who had given the robe.<sup>73</sup>

As do the tales from Constantinople of Olympias and other noblewomen giving their robes to the church, Leuobovera’s tale tells of a nun, Didimia, from a noble family who gave the purple silk robe as a gift to the monastery. Didimia’s robe is in fact triply a gift, from the nun’s family to the

nun, from the nun to the abbess, and from the abbess to the church. Unlike another cloth mentioned by the author, Gregory, which was too thin to cover the bread and wine on the altar, in this case the abbess made sure to make a “suitable cloth” to adorn the altar table, after which she felt free to use the scraps to embellish the garment of her niece; the emphasis is both on the proper reuse of the expensive textile *and* the practicality of making sure none of the remnants went to waste.

Together, these stories tell of a particular type of female piety practiced by elite women both east and west, who gave their imported purple-dyed silk robes to be used as “suitable” coverings for the altar table. This mode of pious giving was clearly a powerful one, as is evidenced by the opposition of male clerics to the practice: Pulcheria’s robe, for example, was torn off of the altar by the patriarch Nestorius because he disapproved of her unusual level of access to the sanctuary of Hagia Sophia.<sup>74</sup> Using the very clothes off of their backs, elite women on both sides of the Mediterranean invented a new type of sacred gift, allowing them to provide appropriately beautiful textiles for the altars of their churches and to connect themselves to the altar, the Eucharistic ritual, and Christ Himself.

### From cloths to bones

Because of their cultic importance and spatial position on the altar, the most important locus of ritual in the church, altar cloths occasionally gained additional powers, functioning in some cases as stand-ins for relics. Now, these cloths were not the first or most spiritually powerful cloths in the Christian tradition. The holiest Christian textiles were in fact contact relics, pieces of cloth that had actually touched holy personages, including Veronica’s “veil”, a piece of linen which recorded an image of Christ’s face when she gave it to Him during His march to His Crucifixion;<sup>75</sup> the conceptually related *mandylion*, the miraculous impression of Christ’s face on a towel, thought to have been kept at Edessa;<sup>76</sup> and the robe (*maphorion*) of the Virgin Mary, the only remaining trace of her on earth, which was kept in the Church of the Virgin at Blachernae in Constantinople.<sup>77</sup>

While these objects were regarded as exceptional, altar cloths themselves could take on additional layers of sacrality under certain circumstances. Because of their locations within the church interior, altar cloths often figured as points of contact between the earthly and spiritual realms.

70 Palladius, *Historia Lausiaca* 61.3–4, trans. Clarke 1918, 167–168. On Melania generally, see Coon 1997, 95–119.

71 The image of holy (elite) women spinning their own garments is a popular one in Late Antique and medieval hagiographies, Constan 2003, 343–350, who also points out the Marian parallels possibly established by the act, as the Virgin had clothed Christ in flesh. On female patronage and cloth production in the early medieval period, see Miller 2014.

72 Gregory of Tours, *Historia Francorum* 10.16, trans. Brehaut 1916, 240–241; on this interesting episode, see Van Dam 1985, 38–40.

73 Gregory of Tours, *Historia Francorum* 10.16, trans. Brehaut 1916, 241.

74 *Ad Cosmam* 5–8, ed. and trans. Nau 1919, 363–364; Constan 2003, 50, 349.

75 See Kuryluk 1991.

76 See Nicolotti 2014, 7–28.

77 See Cameron 2000; the sources for the early history of the Blachernae shrine are translated in Mango 1972, 34–35.

In the tumultuous religious climate of Milan in the late 4<sup>th</sup> century, a girl who desired to devote herself to the Church against the wishes of her family ran to the altar during service and grabbed the cloth, using it as a veil, asking the bishop, Ambrose, to consecrate her as a virgin of the church.<sup>78</sup> In this instance, the altar cloth actually *became* a kind of garment (the reverse of the transformation *from* garment to cloth that we saw previously), lending weight to her petition to the bishop.

However, in Late Antiquity, the very fabric that made up the altar cloth could on occasion gain special status within its cultic context. Through contact with relics, most often the bones of saints, altar cloths could also be converted into relics that possessed miraculous powers, in effect becoming gifts that gave back blessings to their patrons and congregations. One such striking episode involved Pope Gregory the Great (d. 604), who was asked for a relic of the apostle Peter.<sup>79</sup> Not willing to give any of the bones of the most holy saint of the Roman church, Gregory invented an ingenious and textile-based solution: in St. Peter's in Rome, he tore a piece off of the altar cloth, placed it in a box, and left it at the tomb of the saint for several days. The recipients of the new cloth relic, a group of Franks, opened the box and were angered by the nature of its contents, and so returned to Rome to take up their grievance with the pope. Gregory opened the box, cut the cloth with a pair of scissors, and, to the surprise of the Franks, the cloth started to bleed, proving that the cloth had been transmuted into a contact relic. While it may seem as if Gregory could have used any type of textile for his new relic, it is significant that the pope decided to use a piece of the altar cloth, connecting the cloth as symbolic cover of Christ's tomb to the *actual* tomb of St. Peter. By uniting liturgical textile with the bones of the saint, Pope Gregory magnified the cultic potency of the altar cloth, allowing it to at least partially take the place of the "real" relics.

## Conclusion

As did the textiles given to the gods by the Greeks and Romans, altar cloths had sacred meanings that stemmed from multiple sources, including their spatial position in the church, the images with which they were decorated, their status as offerings to God and the saints, and, sometimes, the very woven materials with which they were made. These coverings acquired a new cultic valence in the early

Christian period, and were valued for their pure white fabric or their rich purple hues and golden embroidery, each of which conveyed particular messages about purity and social and religious status. Even among elites, different patrons chose different images and inscriptions for their altar cloths, some emphasising the votive character of their offerings, given on particularly important days in the liturgical cycle, and others choosing to focus on elaborate image cycles in which they themselves appeared, connecting them to visually to the divine. By giving altar cloths as gifts, Late Antique patrons were able to ensure the central place of their offerings within church interiors, and forge links with the holy altar table, sometimes even with the clothes off of their own backs.

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78 Ambrose, *De virginibus* 1.11.65–66, *PL* 16.218AC; see Brown 1988, 343–344.

79 This episode survives not from a western source but from an eastern author, possibly a monk in one of the monasteries in Palestine in the late 6<sup>th</sup> century, *Georgian Appendix to the Spiritual Meadow* 12, in Garitte 1966, 406–407; see also Booth 2014, 113–114.

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